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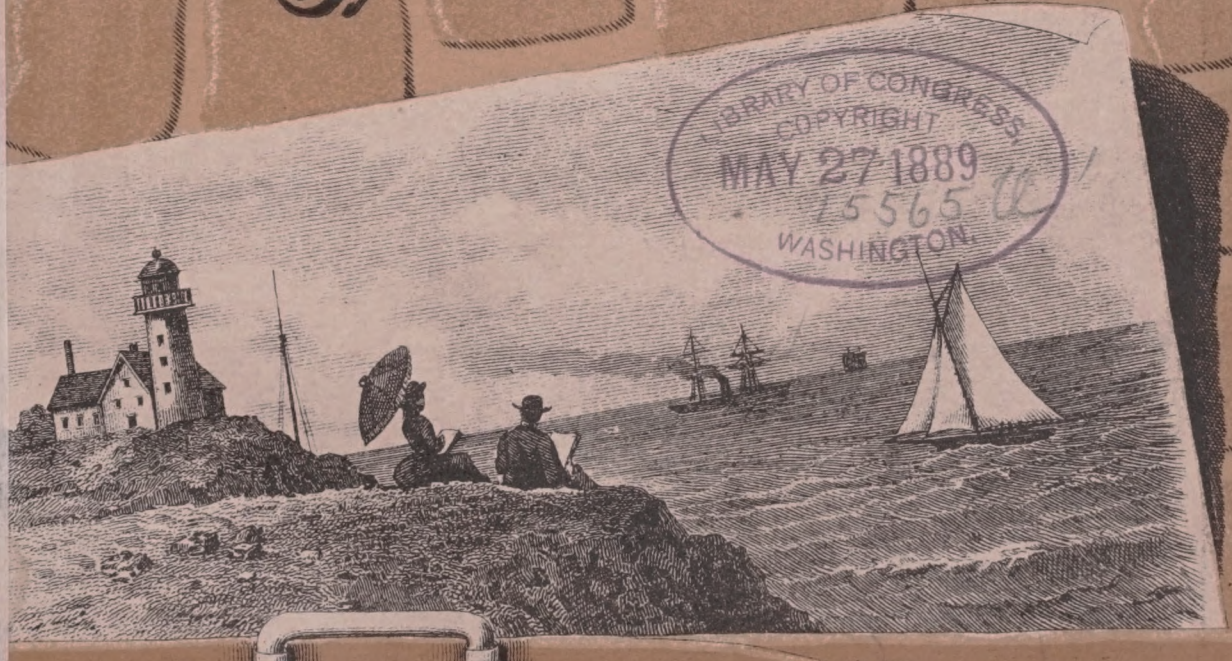
The Autobiography of a Slander

By Edna Lyall.



GEO. MUNRO,

17 to 27 Vandewater St. NEW YORK.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SLANDER.

BY

EDNA LYALL. ps.
Ada Ellen Bayly

"JERRY,"
AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

THE "DUCHESS." ps.
Mrs. Margaret Wolfe (Hamilton) Hungerford

NEW YORK:
GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER,
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Trust not to each accusing tongue,
As most weak persons do;
But still believe that story false
Which ought not to be true.

SHERIDAN.

DEDICATED

TO ALL

WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SLANDER.

MY FIRST STAGE.

At last the tea came up, and so
With that our tongues began to go.
Now in that house you're sure of knowing
The smallest scrap of news that's going.
We find it there the wisest way
To take some care of what we say.

Recreation. JANE TAYLOR.

I WAS born on the 2d September, 1886, in a small, dull, country town. When I say the town was dull, I mean, of course, that the inhabitants were unenterprising, for in itself Muddleton was a picturesque place, and though it labored under the usual disadvantage of a dearth of bachelors and a superfluity of spinsters, it might have been pleasant enough had it not been a favorite resort for my kith and kin.

My father has long enjoyed a world-wide notoriety; he is not, however, as a rule, named in good society, though he habitually frequents it; and as I am led to believe that my autobiography will possibly be circulated by Mr. Mudie, and will lie about on drawing-room tables, I will merely mention that a most striking representation of my progenitor, under his *nom de théâtre*, Mephistopheles,

may be seen now in London, and I should recommend all who wish to understand his character to go to the Lyceum, though, between ourselves, he strongly disapproves of the whole performance.

I was introduced into the world by an old lady named Mrs. O'Reilly. She was a very pleasant old lady, the wife of a general, and one of those sociable, friendly, talkative people who do much to cheer their neighbors, particularly in a deadly-lively provincial place like Muddleton, where the standard of social intercourse is not very high. Mrs. O'Reilly had been in her day a celebrated beauty; she was now gray-haired and stout, but still there was something impressive about her, and few could resist the charm of her manner and the pleasant, easy flow of her small talk. Her love of gossip amounted almost to a passion, and nothing came amiss to her; she liked to know everything about everybody, and in the main I think her interest was a kindly one, though she found that a little bit of scandal, every now and then, added a piquant flavor to the homely fare provided by the commonplace life of the Muddletonians.

I will now, without further preamble, begin the history of my life.

* * * * * * *

"I assure you, my dear Lena, Mr. Zaluski is nothing less than a Nihilist!"

The sound waves set in motion by Mrs. O'Reilly's words were tumultuously heaving in the atmosphere when I sprung into being a young but perfectly formed and most promising slander. A delicious odor of tea pervaded the

drawing-room, it was orange-flower pekoe, and Mrs. O'Reilly was just handing one of the delicate Crown Derby cups to her visitor, Miss Lena Houghton.

"What a shocking thing! Do you really mean it?" exclaimed Miss Houghton. "Thank you—cream, but no sugar; don't you know, Mrs. O'Reilly, that it is only Low-Church people who take sugar nowadays? But, really, now, about Mr. Zaluski? How did you find it out?"

"My dear, I am an old woman, and I have learned in the course of a wandering life to put two and two together," said Mrs. O'Reilly. She had somehow managed to ignore middle age, and had passed from her position of renowned beauty to the position which she now firmly and constantly claimed of many years and much experience. "Of course," she continued, "like every one else, I was glad enough to be friendly and pleasant to Sigismund Zaluski; and as to his being a Pole, why, I think it rather pleased me than otherwise. You see, my dear, I have knocked about the world and mixed with all kinds of people. Still, one must draw the line somewhere, and I confess it gave me a very painful shock to find that he had such violent antipathies to law and order. When he took Ivy Cottage for the summer I made the general call at once, and before long we had become very intimate with him; but, my dear, he's not what I thought him—not at all!"

"Well, now, I am delighted to hear you say that," said Lena Houghton, with some excitement in her manner, "for it exactly fits in with what I always felt about him. From the first I disliked that man, and the way he goes

on with Gertrude Morley is simply dreadful. If they are not engaged they ought to be; that's all I can say."

"Engaged, my dear! I trust not," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "I had always hoped for something very different for dear Gertrude. Quite between ourselves, you know, my nephew John Carew is over head and ears in love with her, and they would make a very good pair; don't you think so?"

"Well, you see, I like Gertrude to a certain extent," replied Lena Houghton. "But I never raved about her as so many people do. Still, I hope she will not be entrapped into marrying Mr. Zaluski; she deserves a better fate than that."

"I quite agree with you," said Mrs. O'Reilly, with a troubled look. "And the worst of it is, poor Gertrude is a girl who might very likely take up foolish revolutionary notions; she needs a strong, wise husband to keep her in order and form her opinions. But is it really true that he flirts with her? This is the first I have heard of it. I can't think how it has escaped my notice."

"Nor I, for indeed he is up at the Morleys' pretty nearly every day. What with tennis, and music, and riding, there is always some excuse for it. I can't think what Gertrude sees in him, he is not even good-looking."

"There is a certain surface good nature about him," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "It deceived even me at first. But, my dear Lena, mark my words: that man has a fearful temper; and I pray Heaven that poor Gertrude may have her eyes opened in time. Besides, to think of that little gentle, delicate thing marrying a Nihilist! It is too dread-

ful; really, quite too dreadful! John would never get over it!"

"The thing I can't understand is why all the world has taken him up so," said Lena Houghton. "One meets him everywhere, yet nobody seems to know anything about him. Just because he has taken Ivy Cottage for four months, and because he seems to be rich and good-natured, every one is ready to run after him."

"Well, well," said Mrs. O'Reilly, "we all like to be neighborly, my dear, and a week ago I should have been ready to say nothing but good of him. But now my eyes have been opened. I'll tell you just how it was. We were sitting here, just as you and I are now, at afternoon tea; the talk had flagged a little, and for the sake of something to say I made some remark about Bulgaria—not that I really knew anything about it, you know, for I'm no politician; still, I knew it was a subject that would make talk just now. My dear, I assure you I was positively frightened. All in a minute his face changed, his eyes flashed, he broke into such a torrent of abuse as I never heard in my life before."

"Do you mean that he abused you?"

"Dear me, no; but Russia and the czar, and tyranny, and despotism, and many other things I had never heard of. I tried to calm him down and reason with him, but I might as well have reasoned with the cockatoo in the window. At last he caught himself up quickly in the middle of a sentence, strode over to the piano, and began to play as he generally does, you know, when he comes here. Well, would you believe it, my dear! instead of improvis-

ing or playing operatic airs as usual, he began to play a stupid little tune which every child was taught years ago, of course with variations of his own. Then he turned round on the music-stool with the oddest smile I ever saw, and said, "Do you know that air, Mrs. O'Reilly?"

"Yes," I said; "but I forget now what it is."

"It was composed by Pestal, one of the victims of Russian tyranny," said he. "The executioner did his work badly, and Pestal had to be strung up twice. In the interval he was heard to mutter, 'Stupid country, where they don't even know how to hang!' Then he gave a little forced laugh, got up quickly, wished me good-bye, and was gone before I could put in a word."

"What a horrible story to tell in a drawing-room!" said Lena Houghton. "I envy Gertrude less than ever."

"Poor girl! What a sad prospect it is for her!" said Mrs. O'Reilly with a sigh. "Of course, my dear, you'll not repeat what I have just told you."

"Not for the world!" said Lena Houghton, emphatically. "It is perfectly safe with me."

The conversation was here abruptly ended, for the page threw open the drawing-room door and announced "Mr. Zaluski."

"Talk of the angel," murmured Mrs. O'Reilly, with a significant smile at her companion. Then skillfully altering the expression of her face, she beamed graciously on the guest who was ushered into the room, and Lena Houghton also prepared to greet him most pleasantly.

I looked with much interest at Sigismund Zaluski, and as I looked I partly understood why Miss Houghton had

been prejudiced against him at first sight. He had lived five years in England, and nothing pleased him more than to be taken for an Englishman. He had had his silky black hair closely cropped in the very hideous fashion of the present day; he wore the ostentatiously high collar now in vogue; and he tried to be sedulously English in every respect. But in spite of his wonderfully fluent speech and almost perfect accent, there lingered about him something which would not harmonize with that ideal of an English gentleman which is latent in most minds. Something he lacked, something he possessed, which interfered with the part he desired to play. The something lacking showed itself in his ineradicable love of jewelry and in a transparent habit of fibbing; the something possessed showed itself in his easy grace of movement, his delightful readiness to amuse and to be amused, and in a certain cleverness and rapidity of idea rarely, if ever, found in an Englishman.

He was a little above the average height and very finely built; but there was nothing striking in his aquiline features and dark-gray eyes, and I think Miss Houghton spoke truly when she said that he was "Not even good-looking." Still, in spite of this, it was a face which grew upon most people, and I felt the least little bit of regret as I looked at him, because I knew that I should persistently haunt and harass him, and should do all that could be done to spoil his life.

Apparently he had forgotten all about Russia and Bulgaria, for he looked radiantly happy. Clearly his thoughts were engrossed with his own affairs, which, in other

words, meant with Gertrude Morley; and though, as I have since observed, there are times when a man in love is an altogether intolerable sort of being, there are other times when he is very much improved by the passion, and regards the whole world with a genial kindness which contrasts strangely with his previous cool cynicism.

"How delighful and home-like your room always looks!" he exclaimed, taking the cup of tea which Mrs. O'Reilly handed to him. "I am horribly lonely at Ivy Cottage. This house is a sort of oasis in the desert."

"Why, you are hardly ever at home, I thought," said Mrs. O'Reilly, smiling. "You are the lion of the neighborhood just now; and I'm sure it is very good of you to come in and cheer a lonely old woman. Are you going to play me something rather more lively to-day?"

He laughed.

"Ah! poor Pestal! I had forgotten all about our last meeting."

"You were very much excited that day," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "I had no idea that your political notions—"

He interrupted her.

"Ah! no politics to-day, dear Mrs. O'Reilly. Let us have nothing but enjoyment and harmony. See, now, I will play you something very much more cheerful."

And sitting down to the piano, he played the bridal march from "Lohengrin," then wandered off into an improvised air, and finally treated them to some recollections of the "Mikado."

Lena Houghton watched him thoughtfully as she put on

her gloves; he was playing with great spirit, and the words of the opera rang in her ears:

> "For he's going to marry Yum-yum, Yum-yum,
> And so you had better be dumb, dumb, dumb!"

I knew well enough that she would not follow this moral advice, and I laughed to myself because the whole scene was such a hollow mockery. The placid, benevolent-looking old lady leaning back in her arm-chair; the girl in her blue gingham and straw hat preparing to go to the afternoon service; the happy lover entering heart and soul into Sullivan's charming music; the pretty room with its Chippendale furniture, its æsthetic hangings, its bowls of roses; and the sound of church bells wafted through the open window on the soft summer breeze.

Yet all the time I lingered there unseen, carrying with me all sorts of dread possibilities. I had been introduced into the world, and even if Mrs. O'Reilly had been willing to admit to herself that she had broken the ninth commandment, and had earnestly desired to recall me, all her sighs and tears and regrets would have availed nothing; so true is the saying, "Of thy words unspoken thou art master; thy spoken word is master of thee."

"Thank you." "Thank you." "How I envy your power of playing!"

The two ladies seemed to vie with each other in making pretty speeches, and Zaluski, who loved music and loved giving pleasure, looked really pleased. I am sure it did not enter his head that his two companions were not sincere, or that they did not wish him well. He was think-

ing to himself how simple and kindly the Muddleton people were, and how great a contrast this life was to his life in London; and he was saying to himself that he had been a fool to live a lonely bachelor life till he was nearly thirty, and yet congratulating himself that he had done so since Gertrude was but nineteen. Undoubtedly, he was seeing blissful visions of the future all the time that he replied to the pretty speeches, and shook hands with Lena Houghton, and opened the drawing-room door for her, and took out his watch to assure her that she had plenty of time and need not hurry to church.

Poor Zaluski! He looked so kindly and pleasant. Though I was only a slander, and might have been supposed to have no heart at all, I did feel sorry for him when I thought of the future and of the grief and pain which would persistently dog his steps.

MY SECOND STAGE.

Bear not false witness, slander not, nor lie;
Truth is the speech of inward purity.

The Light of Asia.

In my first stage the reader will perceive that I was a comparatively weak and harmless little slander, with merely that taint of original sin which was to be expected in one of such parentage. But I developed with great rapidity; and I believe men of science will tell you that this is always the case with low organisms. That, for instance, while it takes years to develop the man from the

baby, and months to develop the dog from the puppy, the baby monad will grow to maturity in an hour.

Personally I should have preferred to linger in Mrs. O'Reilly's pleasant drawing-room, for, as I said before, my victim interested me, and I wanted to observe him more closely and hear what he talked about. But I received orders to attend even-song at the parish church, and to haunt the mind of Lena Houghton.

As we passed down the High Street the bells rang out loud and clear, and they made me feel the same slight sense of discomfort that I had felt when I looked at Zaluski; however, I went on, and soon entered the church. It was a fine old Gothic building, and the afternoon sunshine seemed to flood the whole place; even the white stones in the aisle were glorified here and there with gorgeous patches of color from the stained-glass windows. But the strange stillness and quiet oppressed me, I did not feel nearly so much at home as in Mrs. O'Reilly's drawing-room—to use a terrestrial simile, I felt like a fish out of water.

For some time, too, I could find no entrance at all into the mind of Lena Houghton. Try as I would, I could not distract her attention or gain the slightest hold upon her, and I really believe I should have been altogether baffled, had not the rector unconsciously come to my aid.

All through the prayers and psalms I had fought a desperate fight without gaining a single inch. Then the rector walked over to the lecturn, and the moment he opened his mouth I knew that my time had come, and that there was a very fair chance of victory before me.

Whether this clergyman had a toothache, or a headache, or a heavy load on his mind, I can not say, but his reading was more lugubrious than the wind in an equinoctial gale. I have since observed that he was only a degree worse than many other clerical readers, and that a strange and delightfully mistaken notion seems prevalent that the Bible must be read in a dreary and unnatural tone of voice, or with a sort of mournful monotony; it is intended as a sort of reverence, but I suspect that it often plays into the hands of my progenitor, as it most assuredly did in the present instance.

Hardly had the rector announced, "Here beginneth the forty-fourth verse of the sixteenth chapter of the book of the Prophet Ezekiel," than a sort of relaxation took place in the mind I was attacking. Lena Houghton's attention could only have been given to the drearily read lesson by a very great effort; she was a little lazy and did not make the effort, she thought how nice it was to sit down again, and then the melancholy voice lulled her into a vague interval of thoughtless inactivity. I promptly seized my opportunity, and in a moment her whole mind was full of me. She was an excitable, impressionable sort of girl, and when once I had obtained an entrance into her mind I found it the easiest thing in the world to dominate her thoughts. Though she stood, and sat, and knelt, and courtesied, and articulated words, her thoughts were entirely absorbed in me. I crowded out the "Magnificat" with a picture of Zaluski and Gertrude Morley. I led her through more terrible future possibilities in the second lesson than would be required for a three-volume novel. I

entirely eclipsed the collects with reflections on unhappy marriages; took her off *viâ* Russia and Nihilism in the state prayers, and by the time we arrived at St. Chrysostom had become so powerful that I had worked her mind into exactly the condition I desired.

The congregation rose. Lena Houghton, still dominated by me, knelt longer than the rest, but at last she got up and walked down the aisle, and I felt a great sense of relief and satisfaction. We were out in the open air once more, and I had triumphed; I was quite sure that she would tell the first person she met. for as I have said before, she was entirely taken up with me, and to have kept me to herself would have required far more strength and unselfishness than she at that moment possessed. She walked slowly through the church-yard, feeling much pleased to see that the curate had just left the vestry door, and that in a few moments their paths must converge.

Mr. Blackthorne had only been ordained three or four years, and was a little younger, and much less experienced in the ways of the world, than Sigismund Zaluski. He was a good, well-meaning fellow, a little narrow, a little prejudiced, a little spoiled by the devotion of the district visitors and Sunday-school teachers; but he was honest and energetic, and as a worker among the poor few could have equaled him. He seemed to fancy, however, that with the poor his work ended, and he was not always so wise as he might have been in Muddleton society.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Houghton," he exclaimed. "Do you happen to know if your brother is at home? I want just to speak to him about the choir treat."

"Oh, he is sure to be in by this time," said Lena.

And they walked home together.

"I am so glad to have this chance of speaking to you," she began, rather nervously. "I wanted particularly to ask your advice."

Mr. Blackthorne, being human and young, was not unnaturally flattered by this remark. True, he was becoming well accustomed to this sort of thing, since the ladies of Muddleton were far more fond of seeking advice from the young and good-looking curate than from the elderly and experienced rector. They said it was because Mr. Blackthorne was so much more sympathetic, and understood the difficulties of the day so much better; but I think they unconsciously deceived themselves, for the rector was one of a thousand, and the curate, though he had in him the makings of a fine man, was as yet altogether crude and young.

"Was it about anything in your district?" he asked, devoutly hoping that she was not going to propound some difficult question about the origin of evil, or any other obscure subject. For though he liked the honor of being consulted, he did not always like the trouble it involved, and he remembered with a shudder that Miss Houghton had once asked him his opinion about the "Ethical Concept of the Good."

"It was only that I was so troubled about something Mrs. O'Reilly has just told me," said Lena Houghton. "You won't tell any one that I told you?"

"On no account," said the curate, warmly.

"Well, you know Mr. Zaluski, and how the Morleys have taken him up?"

"Every one has taken him up," said the curate, with the least little touch of resentment in his tone. "I knew that the Morleys were his special friends; I imagine that he admires Miss Morley."

"Yes, every one thinks they are either engaged or on the brink of it. And oh! Mr. Blackthorne, can't you or somebody put a stop to it, for it seems such a dreadful fate for poor Gertrude?"

The curate looked startled.

"Why, I don't profess to like Mr. Zaluski," he said. "But I don't know anything exactly against him."

"But I do. Mrs. O'Reilly has just been telling me."

"What did she tell you?" he asked, with some curiosity.

"Why, she has found out that he is really a Nihilist—just think of a Nihilist going about loose like this, and playing tennis at the rectory and all the good houses! And not only that, but she says he is altogether a dangerous, unprincipled man with a dreadful temper. You can't think how unhappy she is about poor Gertrude, and so am I, for we were at school together and have always been friends."

"I am very sorry to hear about it," said Mr. Blackthorne, "but I don't see that anything can be done. You see, one does not like to interfere in these sort of things. It seems officious rather, and meddlesome."

"Yes, that is the worst of it," she replied, with a sigh. "I suppose we can do nothing. Still, it has been a great

relief just to tell you about it and get it off my mind. I suppose we can only hope that something may put a stop to it all; we must leave it to chance."

This sentiment amused me not a little. Leave it to chance indeed! Had she not caused me to grow stronger and larger by every word she uttered? And had not the conversation revealed to me Mr. Blackthorne's one vulnerable part? I knew well enough that I should be able to dominate his thoughts as I had done hers. Finding me burdensome, she had passed me on to somebody else with additions that vastly increased my working powers, and then she talked of leaving it to chance! The way in which mortals practice pious frauds on themselves is really delightful! And yet Lena Houghton was a good sort of girl, and had from her childhood repeated the catechism words which proclaim that "My duty to my neighbor is to love him as myself. . . . To keep my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering." What is more, she took great pains to teach these words to a big class of Sunday-school children, and went, rain or shine, to spend two hours each Sunday in a stuffy school-room for that purpose. It was strange that she should be so ready to believe evil of her neighbor, and so eager to spread the story. But my progenitor is clever, and doubtless knows very well whom to select as his tools.

By this time they had reached a comfortable-looking, red-brick house with white stone facings, and in the discussion of the arrangements for the choir treat I was entirely forgotten.

MY THIRD STAGE.

Alas! such is our weakness, that we often more readily believe and speak of another that which is evil than that which is good. But perfect men do not easily give credit to every report; because they know man's weakness, which is very prone to evil, and very subject to fail in words.—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

ALL through that evening, and through the first part of the succeeding day, I was crowded out of the curate's mind by a host of thoughts with which I had nothing in common; and though I hovered about him as he taught in the school, and visited several sick people, and argued with a habitual drunkard, and worked at his Sunday sermon, a Power, which I felt but did not understand, baffled all my attempts to gain an entrance and attract his notice. I made a desperate attack on him after lunch as he sat smoking and enjoying a well-earned rest, but it was of no avail. I followed him to a large garden-party later on, but to my great annoyance he went about talking to every one in the pleasantest way imaginable, though I perceived that he was longing to play tennis instead.

At length, however, my opportunity came. Mr. Blackthorne was talking to the lady of the house, Mrs. Courtenay, when she suddenly exclaimed:

"Ah, here is Mr. Zaluski just arriving. I began to be afraid that he had forgotten the day, and he is always such an acquisition. How do you do, Mr. Zaluski?" she said, greeting my victim warmly as he stepped on to the ter-

race." So glad you were able to come. You know Mr. Blackthorne, I think?"

Zaluski greeted the curate pleasantly, and his dark eyes lighted up with a gleam of amusement.

"Oh, we are great friends," he said, laughingly. "Only, you know, I sometimes shock him a little—just a very little."

"That is very unkind of you, I am sure," said Mrs. Courtenay, smiling.

"No, not at all," said Zaluski, with the audacity of a privileged being. "It is just my little amusement, very harmless, very—what you call innocent. Mr. Blackthorne can not make up his mind about me. One day I appear to him to be Catholic, the next Comtist, the next Orthodox Greek, the next a convert to the Anglican communion. I am a mystery, you see! And mysteries are as indispensable in life as in a romance."

He laughed. Mrs. Courtenay laughed too, and a little friendly banter was carried on between them, while the curate stood by feeling rather out of it.

I drew nearer to him, perceiving that my prospects bid fair to improve. For very few people can feel out of it without drifting into a self-regarding mood, and then they are the easiest prey imaginable. Undoubtedly a man like Zaluski, with his easy nonchalance, his knowledge of the world, his genuine good nature, and the background of sterling qualities which came upon you as a surprise because he loved to make himself seem a mere idler, was apt to eclipse an ordinary mortal like James Blackthorne. The curate perceived this and did not like to be eclipsed—

as a matter of fact, nobody does. It seemed to him a little unfair that he, who had hitherto been made much of, should be called to play second fiddle to this rich Polish fellow who had never done anything for Muddleton or the neighborhood. And then, too, Sigismund Zaluski had a way of poking fun at him which he resented, and would not take in good part.

Something of this began to stir in his mind; and he cordially hated the Pole when Jim Courtenay, who arranged the tennis, came up and asked him to play in the next set, passing the curate by altogether.

Then I found no difficulty at all in taking possession of him; indeed, he was delighted to have me brought back to his memory, he positively gloated over me, and I grew apace.

Zaluski, in the seventh heaven of happiness, was playing with Gertrude Morley, and his play was so good and so graceful that every one was watching it with pleasure. His partner, too, played well; she was a pretty, fair-haired girl, with soft gray eyes, like the eyes of a dove; she wore a white tennis dress and a white sailor hat, and at her throat she had fastened a cluster of those beautiful orange-colored roses known by the prosaic name of "William Allan Richardson."

If Mr. Blackthorne grew angry as he watched Sigismund Zaluski, he grew doubly angry as he watched Gertrude Morley. He said to himself that it was intolerable that such a girl should fall a prey to a vain, shallow, unprincipled foreigner, and in a few minutes he had painted

such a dark picture of poor Sigismund that my strength increased tenfold.

"Mr. Blackthorne," said Mrs. Courtenay, "would you take Mrs. Milton-Cleave to have an ice?"

Now Mrs. Milton Cleave had always been one of the curate's great friends. She was a very pleasant, talkative woman of six-and-thirty, and a general favorite. Her popularity was well deserved, for she was always ready to do a kind action, and often went out of her way to help people who had not the slightest claim upon her. There was, however, no repose about Mrs. Milton-Cleave, and an acute observer would have discovered that her universal readiness to help was caused to some extent by her good heart, but in a very large degree by her restless and over-active brain. Her sphere was scarcely large enough for her, she would have made an excellent head of an orphan asylum or manager of some large institution, but her quiet country life offered far too narrow a field for her energy.

"It is really quite a treat to watch Mr. Zaluski's play," she remarked, as they walked to the refreshment tent at the other end of the lawn. "Certainly foreigners know how to move much better than we do; our best players look awkward beside them."

"Do you think so?" said Mr. Blackthorne. "I am afraid I am full of prejudice, and consider that no one can equal a true-born Briton."

"And I quite agree with you in the main," said Mrs. Milton-Cleave. "Though I confess that it is rather refreshing to have a little variety."

The curate was silent, but his silence merely covered his absorption in me, and I began to exercise a faint influence through his mind on the mind of his companion. This caused her at length to say:

"I don't think you quite like Mr. Zaluski. Do you know much about him?"

"I have met him several times this summer," said the curate, in the tone of one who could have said much more if he would.

The less satisfying his replies, the more Mrs. Milton-Cleave's curiosity grew.

"Now, tell me candidly," she said at length. "Is there not some mystery about our new neighbor? Is he quite what he seems to be?"

"I fear he is not," said Mr. Blackthorne, making the admission in a tone of reluctance, though, to tell the truth, he had been longing to pass me on for the last five minutes.

"You mean that he is fast?"

"Worse than that," said James Blackthorne, lowering his voice as they walked down one of the shady garden paths. "He is a dangerous, unprincipled fellow, and into the bargain an avowed Nihilist. All that is involved in that word you perhaps scarcely realize."

"Indeed I do," she exclaimed with a shocked expression. "I have just been reading a review of that book of Stepniak. Their social and religious views are terrible; free love, atheism, everything that could bring ruin on the human race. Is he indeed a Nihilist?"

Mr. Blackthorne's conscience gave him a sharp prick,

for he knew that he ought not to have passed me on. He tried to pacify it with the excuse that he had only promised not to tell that Miss Houghton had been his informant.

"I assure you," he said, impressively, "it is only too true. I know it on the best authority."

And here I can not help remarking that it has always seemed to me strange that even experienced women of the world, like Mrs. Milton-Cleave, can be so easily hoodwinked by that vague nonentity, "The Best Authority." I am inclined to think that were I a human being I should retort with an expressive motion of the finger and thumb, "Oh, you know it on the best authority, do you? Then *that* for your story!"

However, I thrived wonderfully on the best authority, and it would be ungrateful of me to speak evil of that powerful though imaginary being.

At right angles with the garden-walk down which the two were pacing there was another wide pathway, bordered by high, closely clipped shrubs. Down this paced a very different couple. Mrs. Milton-Cleave caught sight of them, and so did the curate. Mrs. Milton-Cleave sighed.

"I am afraid he is running after Gertrude Morley! Poor girl! I hope she will not be deluded into encouraging him."

And then they made just the same little set remarks about the desirability of stopping so dangerous an acquaintance, and the impossibility of interfering with other people's affairs, and the sad necessity of standing by with folded hands. I laughed so much over their hollow little phrases that at last I was fain to beat a retreat, and,

prompted by curiosity to know a little of the truth, I followed Sigismund and Gertrude down the broad grassy pathway.

I knew of course a good deal of Zaluski's character, because my own existence and growth pointed out what he was not. Still, to study a man by a process of negation is tedious, and though I knew that he was not a Nihilist, or a free-lover, or an atheist, or an unprincipled fellow with a dangerous temper, yet I was curious to see him as he really was.

"If you only knew how happy you had made me!" he was saying. And indeed, as far as happiness went, there was not much to choose between them, I fancy; for Gertrude Morley looked radiant, and in her dove-like eyes there was the reflection of the love which flashed in his.

"You must talk to my mother about it," she said, after a minute's silence. "You see, I am still under age, and she and Uncle Henry, my guardian, must consent before we are actually betrothed!"

"I will see them at once," said Zaluski, eagerly.

"You could see my mother," she replied. "But Uncle Henry is still in Sweden and will not be in town for another week."

"Must we really wait so long?" sighed Sigismund, impatiently.

She laughed at him gently.

"A whole week! But then we are sure of each other. I do not think we ought to grumble."

"But perhaps they may think that a merchant is no fitting match for you," he suggested. "I am nothing

but a plain merchant, and my people have been in the same business for four generations. As far as wealth goes I might perhaps satisfy your people, but for the rest I am but a prosaic fellow, with neither noble blood, or the brain of a genius, nor anything out of the common."

"It will be enough for my mother that we love each other," she said, shyly.

"And your uncle?"

"It will be enough for him that you are upright and honorable—enough that you are yourself, Sigismund."

They were sitting now in a little sheltered recess clipped out of the yew-trees. When that softly spoken "Sigismund" fell from her lips, Zaluski caught her in his arms and kissed her again and again.

"I have led such a lonely life," he said, after a few minutes, during which their talk had baffled my comprehension. "All my people died while I was still a boy."

"Then who brought you up?" she inquired.

"An uncle of mine, the head of our firm in St. Petersburg. He was very good to me, but he had children of his own, and of course I could not be to him as one of them. I have had many friends and much kindness shown to me, but love! none till to-day."

And then again they fell into the talk which I could not fathom. And so I left them in their brief happiness, for my time of idleness was over, and I was ordered to attend Mrs. Milton-Cleave without a moment's delay.

MY FOURTH STAGE.

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!

R. BROWNING.

MRS. MILTON-CLEAVE had one weakness—she was possessed by an inordinate desire for influence. This made her always eagerly anxious to be interesting both in her conversation and in her letters, and to this end she exerted herself with unwearying activity. She liked influencing Mr. Blackthorne, and spared no pains on him that afternoon; and indeed the curate was a good deal flattered by her friendship, and considered her one of the most clever and charming women he had ever met.

Sigismund and Gertrude returned to the ordinary world just as Mrs. Milton-Cleave was saying good-bye to the hostess. She glanced at them searchingly.

"Good-bye, Gertrude," she said, a little coldly. "Did you win at tennis?"

"Indeed we did," said Gertrude, smiling. "We came off with flying colors. It was a love set."

The girl was looking more beauitful than ever, and there was a tell-tale color in her cheeks and an unusual light in her soft gray eyes. As for Zaluski, he was so evidently in love, and had the audacity to look so supremely happy, that Mrs. Milton-Cleave was more than ever impressed with the gravity of the situation. The curate handed her into her victoria, and she drove home through

the sheltered lanes musing sadly over the story she had heard, and wondering what Gertrude's future would be. When she reached home, however, the affair was driven from her thoughts by her children, of whom she was devotedly fond. They came running to meet her, frisking like so many kittens round her as she went upstairs to her room, and begging to stay with her while she dressed for dinner. During dinner she was engrossed with her husband; but afterward, when she was alone in the drawing-room, I found my opportunity for working on her restless mind.

"Dear me," she exclaimed, throwing aside the newspaper she had just taken up, "I ought to write to Mrs. Selldon at Dulminster about that G. F. S. girl!"

As a matter of fact, she ought not to have written then, the letter might well have waited till the morning, and she was overtired and needed rest. But I was glad to see her take up her pen, for I knew I should come in most conveniently to fill up the second side of the sheet.

Before long Jane Stiggins, the member who had migrated from Muddleton to Dulminster, had been duly reported, wound up, and made over to the archdeacon's wife. Then the tired hand paused. What more could she say to her friend?

"We are leading our usual quiet life here," she wrote, "with the ordinary round of tennis-parties and picnics to enliven us. The children have all been wonderfully well, and I think you will see a great improvement in your god-

daughter when you next come to stay with us." "Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Milton-Cleave, "how dull and stupid I am to-night! I can't think of a single thing to say." Then at length I flashed into her mind, and with a sigh of relief and a little rising flush of excitement she went on much more rapidly.

"It is such a comfort to be quite at rest about them, and to see them all looking so well. But I suppose one can never be without some cause of worry, and just now I am very unhappy about that nice girl Gertrude Morley whom you admired so much when you were last here. The whole neighborhood has been dominated this year by a young Polish merchant named Sigismund Zaluski, who is very clever and musical and knows well how to win popularity. He has taken Ivy Cottage for four months, and is, I fear, doing great mischief. The Morleys are his special friends, and I greatly fear he is making love to Gertrude. Now I know privately, on the very best authority, that although he has so completely deceived every one and has managed so cleverly to pose as a respectable man, that Mr. Zaluski is really a Nihilist, a free-lover, an atheist, and altogether a most unprincipled man. He is very clever, and speaks English most fluently, indeed, he has lived in London since the spring of 1881—he told me so himself. I can not help fancying that he must have been concerned in the assassination of the late czar, which you will remember took place in that year early in March. It is terrible to think of the poor Morleys entering blindfold on such an undesirable connection; but, at the same time, I really do not feel that I can say anything about it.

Excuse this hurried note, dear Charlotte, and with love to yourself and kindest remembrances to the archdeacon,

"Believe me, very affectionately yours,

"GEORGINA MILTON-CLEAVE.

"P.S.—It may perhaps be as well not to mention this affair about Gertrude Morley and Mr. Zaluski. They are not yet engaged, as far as I know, and I sincerely trust it may prove to be a mere flirtation."

I had now grown to such enormous dimensions that any one who had known me in my infancy would scarcely have recognized me, while naturally the more I grew the more powerful I became, and the more capable both of impressing the minds which received me and of injuring Zaluski. Poor Zaluski, who was so foolishly, thoughtlessly happy. He little dreamed of the fate that awaited him! His whole world was bright and full of promise; each hour of love seemed to improve him, to deepen his whole character, to tone down his rather flippant manner, to awaken for him new and hitherto unthought-of realities.

But while he basked in his new happiness I traveled in my close, stuffy envelope to Dulminster, and after having been tossed in and out of bags, shuffled, stamped, thumped, tied up, and generally shaken about, I arrived one morning at Dulminster Archdeaconry, and was laid on the breakfast-table among other appetizing things to greet Mrs. Selldon when she came down-stairs.

MY FIFTH STAGE.

Also it is wise not to believe everything you hear, nor immediately to carry to the ears of others what you have either heard or believed.—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

THOUGH I was read in silence at the breakfast-table and not passed on to the archdeacon, I lay dormant in Mrs. Selldon's mind all day, and came to her aid that night when she was at her wits' end for something to talk about.

Mrs. Selldon, though a most worthy and estimable person, was of a phlegmatic temperament; her sympathies were not easily aroused, her mind was lazy and torpid, in conversation she was unutterably dull. There were times when she was painfully conscious of this, and would have given much for the ceaseless flow of words which fell from the lips of her friend Mrs. Milton-Cleave. And that evening after my arrival chanced to be one of these occasions, for there was a dinner-party at the archdeaconry, given in honor of a well-known author who was spending a few days in the neighborhood.

"I wish you could have Mr. Shrewsbury at your end of the table, Thomas," Mrs. Selldon had remarked to her husband with a sigh, as she was arranging the guests on paper that afternoon.

"Oh, he must certainly take you in, my dear," said the archdeacon. "And he seems a very clever, well-read man; I am sure you will find him easy to talk to."

Poor Mrs. Selldon thought that she would rather have had some one who was neither clever nor well read. But

there was no help for her, and, whether she would or not, she had to go in to dinner with the literary lion.

Mr. Mark Shrewsbury was a novelist of great ability. Some twenty years before, he had been called to the bar, and, conscious of real talent, had been greatly imbittered by the impossibility of getting on in his profession. At length, in disgust, he gave up all hopes of success and devoted himself instead to literature. In this field he won the recognition for which he craved; his books were read everywhere, his name became famous, his income steadily increased, and he had the pleasant consciousness that he had found his vocation. Still, in spite of his success, he could not forget the bitter years of failure and disappointment which had gone before, and though his novels were full of genius they were pervaded by an under-tone of sarcasm, so that people after reading them were more ready than before to take cynical views of life.

He was one of those men whose quiet, impassive faces reveal scarcely anything of their character. He was neither tall nor short, neither dark nor fair, neither handsome nor the reverse; in fact his personality was not in the least impressive; while, like most true artists, he observed all things so quietly that you rarely discovered that he was observing at all.

"Dear me!" people would say, "is Mark Shrewsbury really here? Which is he? I don't see any one at all like my idea of a novelist."

"There he is—that man in spectacles," would be the reply.

And really the spectacles were the only noteworthy thing about him.

Mrs. Selldon, who had seen several authors and authoresses in her time, and knew that they were as a rule most ordinary, humdrum kind of people, was quite prepared for her fate. She remembered her astonishment as a girl when, having laughed and cried at the play, and taken the chief actor as her ideal hero, she had had him pointed out to her one day in Regent Street, and found him to be a most commonplace-looking man, the very last person one would have supposed capable of stirring the hearts of a great audience.

Meanwhile dinner progressed, and Mrs. Selldon talked to an empty-headed but loquacious man on her left, and racked her brains for something to say to the alarmingly silent author on her right. She remembered hearing that Charles Dickens would often sit silent through the whole of dinner, observing quietly those about him, but that at dessert he would suddenly come to life and keep the whole table in roars of laughter. She feared that Mr. Shrewsbury meant to imitate the great novelist in the first particular, but was scarcely likely to follow his example in the last. At length she asked him what he thought of the cathedral, and a few tepid remarks followed.

"How unutterably this good lady bores me!" thought the author.

"How odd it is that his characters talk so well in his books, and that he is such a stick!" thought Mrs. Selldon.

"I suppose it's the effect of cathedral-town atmosphere," reflected the author.

"I suppose he is eaten up with conceit and won't trouble himself to talk to me," thought the hostess.

By the time the fish had been removed they had arrived at a state of mutual contempt. Mindful of the reputation they had to keep up, however, they exerted themselves a little more while the *entrées* went round.

"Seldom reads, I should fancy, and never thinks!" reflected the author, glancing at Mrs. Selldon's placid unintellectual face. "What on earth can I say to her?"

"Very unpractical, I am sure," reflected Mrs. Selldon. "The sort of man who lives in a world of his own, and only lays down his pen to take up a book. What subject shall I start?"

"What delightful weather we have been having the last few days!" observed the author. "Real, genuine summer weather at last." The same remark had been trembling on Mrs. Selldon's lips. She assented with great cheerfulness and alacrity; and over that invaluable topic which is always so safe and so congenial, and so ready to hand, they grew quite friendly, and the conversation for fully five minutes was animated.

An interval of thought followed.

"How wearisome is society!" reflected Mrs. Selldon. "It is hard that we must spend so much money in giving dinners and have so much trouble for so little enjoyment."

"One pays dearly for fame," reflected the author. "What a confounded nuisance it is to waste all this time when there are the last proofs of 'What Caste?' to be

done for the nine-o'clock post to-morrow morning! Goodness knows what time I shall get to bed to-night!"

Then Mrs. Selldon thought regretfully of the comfortable easy-chair that she usually enjoyed after dinner, and the ten minutes' nap and the congenial needle-work. And Mark Shrewsbury thought of his chambers in Pump Court, and longed for his type-writer, and his books, and his swivel-chair, and his favorite meerschaum.

"I should be less afraid to talk if there were not always the horrible idea that he may take down what one says," thought Mrs. Selldon.

"I should be less bored if she would only be her natural self," reflected the author. "And would not talk prim platitudes." (This was hard, for he had talked nothing else himself.) "Does she think she is so interesting that I am likely to study her for my next book?"

"Have you been abroad this summer?" inquired Mrs. Selldon, making another spasmodic attempt at conversation.

"No; I detest traveling," replied Mark Shrewsbury. "When I need change I just settle down in some quiet country district for a few months—somewhere near Windsor, or Reigate, or Muddleton. There is nothing to my mind like our English scenery."

"Oh, do you know Muddleton?" exclaimed Mrs. Selldon. "Is it not a charming little place? I often stay in the neighborhood with the Milton-Cleaves."

"I know Milton-Cleave well," said the author. "A capital fellow, quite the typical country gentleman."

"Is he not?" said Mrs. Selldon, much relieved to have

found this subject in common. "His wife is a great friend of mine; she is full of life and energy, and does an immense amount of good. Did you say you had stayed with them?"

"No; but last year I took a house in that neighborhood for a few months; a most charming little place it was, just fit for a lonely bachelor. I dare say you remember it—Ivy Cottage, on the Newton Road."

"Did you stay there? Now what a curious coincidence! Only this morning I heard from Mrs. Milton-Cleave that Ivy Cottage has been taken this summer by a Mr. Sigismund Zaluski, a Polish merchant, who is doing untold harm in the neighborhood. He is a very clever, unscrupulous man, and has managed to take in almost every one."

"Why, what is he? A swindler? Or a burglar in disguise, like the 'House on the Marsh' fellow?" asked the author, with a little twinkle of amusement in his face.

"Oh, much worse than that," said Mrs. Selldon, lowering her voice. "I assure you, Mr. Shrewsbury, you would hardly credit the story if I were to tell it you, it is really stranger than fiction." Mark Shrewsbury pricked up his ears, he no longer felt bored, he began to think that, after all, there might be some compensation for this wearisome dinner-party. He was always glad to seize upon material for future plots, and somehow the notion of a mysterious Pole suddenly making his appearance in that quiet country neighborhood and winning undeserved popularity rather took his fancy. He thought he might make something of it. However, he knew human nature too well to ask a direct question.

"I am sorry to hear that," he said, becoming all at once quite sympathetic and approachable. "I don't like the thought of those simple, unsophisticated people being hoodwinked by a scoundrel."

"No; is it not sad?" said Mrs. Selldon. "Such pleasant hospitable people as they are! Do you remember the Morleys?"

"Oh, yes! There was a pretty daughter who played tennis well."

"Quite so—Gertrude Morley. Well, would you believe it, this miserable fortune-hunter is actually either engaged to her or on the eve of being engaged! Poor Mrs. Milton-Cleave is so unhappy about it, for she knows, on the best authority, that Mr. Zaluski is unfit to enter a respectable house."

"Perhaps he is really some escaped criminal?" suggested Mr. Shrewsbury, tentatively.

Mrs. Selldon hesitated. Then under the cover of the general roar of conversation, she said in a low voice:

"You have guessed quite rightly. He is one of the Nihilists who were concerned in the assassination of the late czar."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Mark Shrewsbury, much startled. "Is it possible?"

"Indeed, it is only too true," said Mrs. Selldon. "I heard it only the other morning, and on the very best authority. Poor Gertrude Morley! My heart bleeds for her."

Now I can't help observing here that this must have

been the merest figure of speech, for just then there was a comfortable little glow of satisfaction about Mrs. Selldon's heart. She was so delighted to have "got on well," as she expressed it, with the literary lion, and by this time dessert was on the table, and soon the tedious ceremony would be happily over.

"But how did he escape?" asked Mark Shrewsbury, still with the thought of "copy" in his mind.

"I don't know the details," said Mrs. Selldon. "Probably they are only known to himself. But he managed to escape somehow in the month of March, 1881, and to reach England safely. I fear it is only too often the case in this world—wickedness is apt to be successful."

"To flourish like a green bay-tree," said Mark Shrewsbury, congratulating himself on the aptness of the quotation, and its suitability to the archediaconal dinner-table. "It is the strangest story I have heard for a long time." Just then there was a pause in the general conversation, and Mrs. Selldon took advantage of it to make the sign for rising, so that no more passed with regard to Zaluski.

Shrewsbury, flattering himself that he had left a good impression by his last remark, thought better not to efface it later in the evening by any other conversation with his hostess. But in the small hours of the night, when he had finished his bundle of proofs, he took up his note-book, and, strangling his yawns, made two or three brief, pithy notes of the story Mrs. Selldon had told him, adding a further development which occurred to him, and wondering to himself whether "Like a Green Bay Tree" would be a selling title.

After this he went to bed, and slept the sleep of the just, or the unbroken sleep which goes by that name.

MY SIXTH STAGE.

But whispering tongues can poison truth.

COLERIDGE.

LONDON in early September is a somewhat trying place. Mark Shrewsbury found it less pleasing in reality than in his visions during the dinner-party at Dulminster. True, his chambers were comfortable, and his type-writer was as invaluable a machine as ever, and his novel was drawing to a successful conclusion; but though all these things were calculated to cheer him, he was nevertheless depressed. Town was dull, the heat was trying, and he had never in his life found it so difficult to settle down to work. He began to agree with the preacher, that "of making many books there is no end," and that, in spite of his favorite "Remington's perfected No. 2," novel-writing was a weariness to the flesh. Soon he drifted into a sort of vague idleness, which was not a good, honest holiday, but just a lazy waste of time and brains. I was pleased to observe this, and was not slow to take advantage of it. Had he stayed in Pump Court he might have forgotten me altogether in his work, but in the soft luxury of his club life I found that I had a very fair chance of being passed on to some one else.

One hot afternoon, on waking from a comfortable nap in the depths of an arm-chair at the club, Shrewsbury was greeted by one of his friends.

"I thought you were in Switzerland, old fellow!" he exclaimed, yawning and stretching himself.

"Came back yesterday—awfully bad season—confoundedly dull," returned the other. "Where have you been?"

"Down with Warren near Dulminster. Deathly dull hole."

"Do for your next novel. Eh?" said the other, with a laugh.

Mark Shrewsbury smiled good-naturedly.

"Talking of novels," he observed, with another yawn, "I heard such a story down there!"

"Did you? Let's hear it. A nice little scandal would do instead of a pick-me-up."

"It's not a scandal. Don't raise your expectations. It's the story of a successful scoundrel."

And then I came out again in full vigor; nay, with vastly increased powers; for though Mark Shrewsbury did not add very much to me or alter my appearance, yet his graphic words made me much more impressive than I had been under the management of Mrs. Selldon.

"H'm! that's a queer story," said the limp-looking young man from Switzerland. "I say, have a game of billiards, will you?"

Shrewsbury, with a prodigious yawn, dragged himself up out of his chair, and the two went off together. As they left the room the only other man present looked up from his newspaper, following them with his eyes.

"Shrewsbury the novelist," he thought to himself. "A sterling fellow! And he heard it from an archdeacon's wife. Confound it all! the thing must be true then.

I'll write and make full inquiries about this Zaluski before consenting to the engagement."

And, being a prompt, business-like man, Gertrude Morley's uncle sat down and wrote the following letter to a Russian friend of his who lived at St. Petersburg, and who might very likely be able to give some account of Zaluski:

"DEAR LEONOFF,—Some very queer stories are afloat about a young Polish merchant, by name Sigismund Zaluski, the head of the London branch of the firm of Zaluski & Zernoff, at St. Petersburg. Will you kindly make inquiries for me as to his true character and history? I would not trouble you with this affair, but the fact is Zaluski has made an offer of marriage to one of my wards, and before consenting to any betrothal I must know what sort of man he really is. I take it for granted that 'there is no smoke without fire,' and that there must be something in the very strange tale which I have just heard on the best authority. It is said that this Sigismund Zaluski left St. Petersburg in March, 1881, after the assassination of the late czar, in which he was seriously compromised. He is said to be an out-and-out Nihilist, an atheist, and, in short, a dangerous, disreputable fellow. Will you sift the matter for me? I don't wish to dismiss the fellow without good reason, but of course I could not think of permitting him to be engaged to my niece until these charges are entirely disproved.

"With kind remembrances to your father,

"I am yours faithfully,

"HENRY CRICHTON-MORLEY."

MY SEVENTH STAGE.

Yet on the dull silence breaking
With a lightning flash, a word,
Bearing endless desolation
On its blighting wings, I heard;
Earth can forge no keener weapon,
Dealing surer death and pain,
And the cruel echo answered
Through long years again.

A. A. PROCTER.

CURIOUSLY enough, I must actually have started for Russia on the same day that Sigismund Zaluski was summoned by his uncle at St. Petersburg to return on a matter of urgent business. I learned afterward that the telegram arrived at Muddleton on the afternoon of one of those sunny September days and found Zaluski as usual at the Morleys'. He was very much annoyed at being called away just then, and before he had received any reply from Gertrude's uncle as to the engagement. However, after a little ebullition of anger, he regained his usual philosophic tone, and, reminding Gertrude that he need not be away from England for more than a fortnight, he took leave of her and set off in a prompt, manly fashion, leaving most of his belongings at Ivy Cottage, which was his for another six weeks, and to which he hoped shortly to return.

After a weary time of imprisonment in my envelope, I at length reached my destination at St. Petersburg and was read by Dmitry Leonoff. He was a very busy man,

and by the same post received dozens of other letters. He merely muttered: "That well-known firm! A most unlikely story!" and then thrust me into a drawer with other letters which had to be answered. Very probably I escaped his memory altogether for the next few days; however, there I was, a startling accusation in black and white; and, as everybody knows, St. Petersburg is not London.

The Leonoff family lived on the third story of a large block of buildings in the Sergeffskaia. About two o'clock in the morning, on the third day after my arrival, the whole household was roused from sleep by thundering raps on the door, and the dreaded cry of "Open to the police!"

The unlucky master was forced to allow himself, his wife, and his children to be made prisoners, while every corner of the house was searched, every book and paper examined.

Leonoff had nothing whatever to do with the revolutionary movement, but absolute innocence does not free people from the police inquisition, and five or six years ago, when the Search mania was at its height, a case is on record of a poor lady whose house was searched seven times within twenty-four hours, though there was no evidence whatever that she was connected with the Nihilists; the whole affair was, in fact, a misunderstanding, as she was perfectly innocent.

This search in Dmitry Leonoff's house was also a misunderstanding, and in the dominions of the czar misunderstandings are of frequent occurrence.

Leonoff knew himself to be innocent, and he felt no fear, though considerable annoyance, while the search was

prosecuted; he could hardly believe the evidence of his senses when, without a word of explanation, he was informed that he must take leave of his wife and children, and go in charge of the gendarmes to the House of Preventive Detention.

Being a sensible man, he kept his temper, remarked courteously that some mistake must have been made, embraced his weeping wife, and went off passively, while the pristav carried away a bundle of letters in which I occupied the most prominent place.

Leonoff remained a prisoner only for a few days; there was not a shred of evidence against him, and, having suffered terrible anxiety, he was finally released. But Mr. Crichton-Morley's letter was never restored to him, it remained in the hands of the authorities, and the night after Leonoff's arrest the pristav, the procurator, and the gendarmes made their way into the dwelling of Sigismund Zaluski's uncle, where a similar search was prosecuted.

Sigismund was asleep and dreaming of Gertrude and of his idyllic summer in England, when his bedroom door was forced open and he was roughly roused by the gendarmes.

His first feeling was one of amazement, his second, one of indignation; however, he was obliged to get up at once and dress, the policeman rigorously keeping guard over him the whole time for fear he should destroy any treasonable document.

"How I shall make them laugh in England when I tell them of this ridiculous affair!" reflected Sigismund, as he

was solemnly marched into the adjoining room where he found his uncle and cousins, each guarded by a policeman.

He made some jesting remark, but was promptly reprimanded by his jailer, and in wearisome silence the household waited while the most rigorous search of the premises was made.

Of course nothing was found; but, to the amazement of all, Sigismund was formally arrested.

"There must be some mistake," he exclaimed. "I have been resident in England for some time. I have no connection whatever with Russian politics."

"Oh, we are well aware of your residence in England," said the pristav. "You left St. Petersburg early in March, 1881. We are well aware of that."

Something in the man's tone made Sigismund's heart stand still. Could he possibly be suspected of complicity in the plot to assassinate the late czar? The idea would have made him laugh had he been in England. In St. Petersburg, and under these circumstances, it made him tremble.

"There is some terrible mistake," he said. "I have never had the slightest connection with the revolutionary party."

The pristav shrugged his shoulders, and Sigismund, feeling like one in a dream, took leave of his relations, and was escorted at once to the House of Preventive Detention.

Arrived at his destination, he was examined in a brief, unsatisfactory way; but when he angrily asked for the evidence on which he had been arrested, he was merely told

that information had been received charging him with being concerned in the assassination of the late emperor, and of being an advanced member of the Nihilist party. His vehement denials were received with scornful incredulity, his departure for England just after the assassination, and his prolonged absence from Russia, of course gave color to the accusation, and he was ordered off to his cell "to reflect."

MY TRIUMPHANT FINALE.

Words are mighty, words are living;
  Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels crowding round us,
  With heaven's light upon their wings;
Every word has its own spirit,
  True or false, that never dies;
Every word man's lips have uttered,
  Echoes in God's skies.

A. A. Procter.

My labors were now nearly at an end, and being, so to speak, off duty, I could occupy myself just as I pleased. I therefore resolved to keep watch over Zaluski in his prison.

For the first few hours after his arrest he was in a violent passion; he paced up and down his tiny cell like a lion in a cage; he was beside himself with indignation, and the blood leaped through his veins like wildfire.

Then he became a little ashamed of himself and tried to grow quiet, and after a sleepless night he passed to the op-

posite extreme and sat all day long on the solitary stool in his grim abode, his head resting on his hands, and his mind a prey to the most fearful melancholy.

The second night, however, he slept and awoke with a steady resolve in his mind.

"It will never do to give way like this, or I shall be in a brain fever in no time," he reflected. "I will get leave to have books and writing materials. I will make the best of a bad business."

He remembered how pleased he had been when Gertrude had once smiled on him because, when all the others in the party were grumbling at the discomforts of a certain picnic where the provisions had gone astray, he had gayly made the best of it and ransacked the nearest cottages for bread and cheese. He set to work bravely now; hoped daily for his release; read all the books he was allowed to receive, invented solitary games, began a novel, and drew caricatures.

In October he was again examined; but, having nothing to reveal, it was inevitable that he could reveal nothing; and he was again sent back to his cell "to reflect."

I perceived that after this his heart began to fail him.

There existed in the House of Preventve Detention a system of communication between the luckless prisoners carried on by means of tapping on the wall. Sigismund, being a clever fellow, had become a great adept at this telegraphic system, and had struck up a friendship with a young student in the next cell. This poor fellow had been imprisoned three years, his sole offense being that he had in his possession a book of which the government did not

approve, and that he was first cousin to a well-known Nihilist.

The two became as devoted to each other as Silvio Pellico and Count Oroboni; but it soon became evident to Valerian Vasilowitch that, unless Zaluski was released, he would soon succumb to the terrible restrictions of prison life.

"Keep up your heart, my friend," he used to say. "I have borne it three years, and am still alive to tell the tale."

"But you are stronger both in mind and body," said Sigismund; "and you are not madly in love as I am."

And then he would pour forth a rhapsody about Gertrude, and about English life, and about his hopes and fears for the future; to all of which Valerian, like the brave fellow he was, replied with words of encouragement.

But at length there came a day when his friend made no answer to his usual morning greeting.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

For some time there was no reply, but after awhile Sigismund rapped faintly the despairing words:

"Dead beat!"

Valerian felt the tears start to his eyes. It was what he had all along expected, and for a time grief and indignation and his miserable helplessness made him almost beside himself. At last he remembered that there was at least one thing in his power. Each day he was escorted by a warder to a tiny square, walled off in the exercising ground, and was allowed to walk for a few minutes; he

would take this opportunity of begging the warder to get the doctor for his friend.

But unfortunately the doctor did not think very seriously of Zaluski's case. In that dreary prison he had patients in the last stages of all kinds of disease, and Sigismund, who had been in confinement too short a time to look as ill as the others, did not receive much attention. Certainly, the doctor admitted, his lungs were affected; probably the sudden change of climate and the lack of good food and fresh air had been too much for him; so the solemn farce ended, and he was left to his fate. "If I were indeed a Nihilist, and suffered for a cause which I had at heart," he telegraphed to Valerian, "I could bear it better. But to be kept here for an imaginary offense, to bear cold and hunger and illness all to no purpose—that beats me. There can't be a God, or such things would not be allowed."

"To me it seems," said Valerian, "that we are the victims of violated law. Others have shown tyranny, or injustice, or cruelty, and we are the victims of their sin. Don't say there is no God. There must be a God to avenge such hideous wrong."

So they spoke to each other through their prison wall as men in the free outer world seldom care to speak; and I, who knew no barriers, looked now on Valerian's gaunt figure, and brave but prematurely old face, now on poor Zaluski, who, in his weary imprisonment had wasted away till one could scarcely believe that he was indeed the same lithe, active fellow who had played tennis at Mrs. Courtenay's garden-party.

Day and night Valerian listened to the terrible cough which came from the adjoining cell. It became perfectly apparent to him that his friend was dying; he knew it as well as if he had seen the burning hectic flush on his hollow cheeks, and heard the panting, hurried breaths, and watched the unnatural brilliancy of his dark eyes.

At length he thought the time had come for another sort of comfort.

"My friend," he said one day, "it is too plain to me now that you are dying. Write to the procurator and tell him so. In some cases men have been allowed to go home to die."

A wild hope seized on poor Sigismund; he sat down to the little table in his cell and wrote a letter to the procurator—a letter which might almost have drawn tears from a flint. Again and again he passionately asserted his innocence, and begged to know on what evidence he was imprisoned. He began to think that he could die content if he might leave this terrible cell, might be a free agent once more, if only for a few days. At least he might in that case clear his character, and convince Gertrude that his imprisonment had been all a hideous mistake; nay, he fancied that he might live through a journey to England and see her once again.

But the procurator would not let him be set free, and refused to believe that his case was really a serious one.

Sigismund's last hope left him.

The days and weeks dragged slowly on, and when, according to English reckoning, New-year's-eve arrived, he could scarcely believe that only seventeen weeks ago he

had actually been with Gertrude, and that disgrace and imprisonment had seemed things that could never come near him, and death had been a far-away possibility, and life had been full of bliss.

As I watched him a strong desire seized me to revisit the scenes of which he was thinking, and I winged my way back to England, and soon found myself in the drowsy, respectable streets of Muddleton.

It was New-year's-eve, and I saw Mrs. O'Reilly preparing presents for her grandchildren, and talking, as she tied them up, of that dreadful Nihilist who had deceived them in the summer. I saw Lena Houghton, and Mr. Blackthorne, and Mrs. Milton-Cleave, kneeling in church on that Friday morning, praying that pity might be shown "upon all prisoners and captives, and all that are desolate or oppressed."

It never occurred to them that they were responsible for the sufferings of one weary prisoner, or that his death would be laid at their door.

I flew to Dulminster, and saw Mrs. Selldon kneeling in the cathedral at the late evening service and rigorously examining herself as to the shortcomings of the dying year. She confessed many things in a vague, untroubled way; but had any one told her that she had cruelly wronged her neighbor, and helped to bring an innocent man to shame, and prison, and death, she would not have believed the accusation.

I sought out Mark Shrewsbury. He was at his chambers in Pump Court working away with his type-writer; he had a fancy for working the old year out and the new

year in, and now he was in the full swing of that novel which had suggested itself to his mind when Mrs. Selldon described the rich and mysterious foreigner who had settled down at Ivy Cottage. Most happily he labored on, never dreaming that his careless words had doomed a fellow-man to a painful and lingering death; never dreaming that while his fingers flew to and fro over his dainty little key-board, describing the clever doings of the unscrupulous foreigner, another man, the victim of his idle gossip, tapped dying messages on a dreary prison wall.

For the end had come.

Through the evening Sigismund rested wearily on his truckle-bed. He could not lie down because of his cough, and, since there were no extra pillows to prop him up, he had to rest his head and shoulders against the wall. There was a gas-burner in the tiny cell, and by its light he looked round the bare walls of his prison with a blank, hopeless, yet wistful gaze; there was the stool, there was the table, there were the clothes he should never wear again, there was the door through which his lifeless body would soon be carried. He looked at everything lingeringly, for he knew that this desolate prison was the last bit of the world he should ever see.

Presently the gas was turned out. He sighed as he felt the darkness close in upon him, for he knew that his eyes would never again see light—knew that in this dark, lonely cell he must lie and wait for death. And he was young and wished to live, and he was in love and longed most terribly for the presence of the woman he loved.

The awful desolateness of the cell was more than he

could endure; he tried to think of his past life, he tried to live once again through those happy weeks with Gertrude; but always he came back to the aching misery of the present—the cold and the pain, and the darkness and the terrible solitude.

His nerveless fingers felt their way to the wall and faintly rapped a summons.

"Valerian!" he said, "I shall not live through the night. Watch with me."

The faint raps sounded clearly in the stillness of the great building, and Valerian dreaded lest the warders should hear them and deal out punishment for an offense which by day they were forced to wink at.

But he would not for the world have deserted his friend. He drew his stool close to the wall, wrapped himself round in all the clothes he could muster, and, shivering with cold, kept watch through the long winter night.

"I am near you," he telegraphed. "I will watch with you till morning."

From time to time Sigismund rapped faint messages, and Valerian replied with comfort and sympathy. Once he thought to himself, "My friend is better; there is more power in his hand." And indeed he trembled, fearing that the sharp, emphatic raps must certainly attract notice and put an end to their communion.

"Tell my love that the accusation was false—false!" the word was vehemently repeated. "Tell her I died broken-hearted, loving her to the end."

"I will tell her all when I am free," said poor Valerian,

wondering with a sigh when his unjust imprisonment would end. "Do you suffer much?" he asked.

There was a brief interval. Sigismund hesitated to tell a falsehood in his last extremity.

"It will soon be over. Do not be troubled for me," he replied. And after that there was a long, long silence.

Poor fellow! he died hard; and I wished that those comfortable English people could have been dragged from their warm beds and brought into the cold, dreary cell where their victim lay, fighting for breath, suffering cruelly both in mind and body. Valerian, listening in sad suspense, heard one more faint word rapped by the dying man:

"Farewell!"

"God be with you!" he replied, unable to check the tears which rained down as he thought of the life so sadly ended, and of his own bereavement.

He heard no more. Sigismund's strength failed him, and I, to whom the darkness made no difference, watched him through the last dread struggle; there was no one to raise him, or hold him, no one to comfort him. Alone in the cold and darkness of that first morning of the year 1887, he died.

Valerian did not hear through the wall his last faint, gasping cry, but I heard it, and its exceeding bitterness would have made mortals weep.

"Gertrude!" he sobbed. "Gertrude!"

And with that his head sunk on his breast, and the life, which but for me might have been so happy and prosperous, was ended.

* * * * * * *

Prompted by curiosity, I instantly returned to Muddleton and sought out Gertrude Morley. I stole into her room. She lay asleep, but her dreams were troubled, and her face, once so fresh and bright, was worn with pain and anxiety.

Scarcely had I entered the room when, to my amazement, I saw the spirit of Sigismund Zaluski.

I saw him bend down and kiss the sleeping girl, and for a moment her sad face lighted up with a radiant smile.

I looked again; he was gone. Then Gertrude threw up both her arms and with a bitter cry awoke from her dream.

"Sigismund!" she cried. "Oh, Sigismund! Now I know that you are dead indeed!"

For a long, long time she lay in a sort of trance of misery. It seemed as if the life had been almost crushed out of her, and it was not until the bells began to ring for the six-o'clock service, merrily pealing out their welcome of the New-year morning, that full conciousness returned to her again. But, as she clearly realized what had happened, she broke into such a passion of tears as I had never before witnessed, while still in the darkness the New-year bells rang gayly, and she knew that they heralded for her the beginning of a lonely life.

And so my work ended; my part in this world was played out. Nevertheless, I still live; and there will come a day when Sigismund and Gertrude shall be comforted and the slanderers punished.

For poor Valerian was right, and there is an Avenger,

in whom even my progenitor believes, and before whom he trembles.

There will come a time when those self-satisfied ones, whose hands are all the time steeped in blood, shall be confronted with me, and shall realize to the full all that their idle words have brought about.

For that day I wait; and though afterward I shall be finally destroyed in the general destruction of all that is unmitigatedly evil, I promise myself a certain satisfaction and pleasure (a feeling I doubtless inherit from my progenitor), when I watch the shame, and horror, and remorse of Mrs. O'Reilly and the rest of the people to whom I owe my existence and rapid growth.

THE END.

"JERRY."

BY THE "DUCHESS."

He was starving! Not hungry as you or I might be, had we fasted for ten or twelve hours at a stretch, but literally dying for want of food. He lay back in the dingy door-way exhausted, half unconscious, his one friend clasped to his breast. His face was dirty and of a leaden hue, the lips a pale purple, and his hands were as the claws of some untamed thing.

Heavily fell the rain upon the darkening street; the chill, bitter fog of the December night grew momentarily deeper, and through it the rain-drops pushed their way sluggishly. Little Jerry, lying in the comfortless shade of the dull door-way, scarcely heeded how the moisture came that saturated the wretched rags that clothed his frame.

For two long days no food had passed his lips. The deadly fever that had seized on him a fortnight ago, while with him, had killed the sense of hunger, but yesterday it had left him, just at the break of dawn, and with its going had come a wild craving for food of some—of *any* sort. Wearily he had lifted his tired little head from the miserable pillow of damp sacking that supported it, to ask in feeble tones for drink, for meat, to find himself in that darksome cellar alone!

It was a horrible shock to the child. He had lain unconscious, caught by the fever's deadly clutch, while the woman with whom he had lived ever since he could remember anything had succumbed to that same fever's influence, and had died and been buried. A miserable drunken creature, in a way kind to him when sober, brutal to him when gin overpowered her, but as she was, the only protector he knew. Whether she was his mother, or whether fate had just drifted him into her path the child never knew, but the sense that she was lost to him forever filled him with an awful dread. He knew it when no voice answered his in the early gloom of that winter's morning, when his parched tongue had cried aloud without response. When he had dragged his worn limbs to the pallet where she used to lie and found she was no longer there, weak as he was, and crushed by this sudden knowledge, he hurried back to his own bed, and with nervous, feverish hands sought there for something that in his terrified haste he could not find. He whistled in a sobbing fashion, and at last, languidly, a tiny shaggy soft thing crept to him and sought his arms, and with the puppy, his only and most passionately prized possession in his arms, he groped his way to the door and found himself upon the street just as the first faint streaks of dawn grew in the sullen east.

That was yesterday. He had met a slattern on emerging from his lair, and had stayed her to ask eagerly, piteously:

"Where is mum?" and she had answered:

"Ye've the right to ask—y'ave! After givin' 'er the

fever as killed her. Get along wi' ye, ye young varmint."

He got along, and all day, oppressed with the weight of the idea that he had killed that woman, and oppressed, too, by the weakness that held him as its prey, he sat in shaded door-ways or gaunt arch-ways, hardly knowing that the demon hunger was gnawing at him. Not heeding either, because hardly able to bear the whinings of the starving puppy he held to him with such a tenacious grasp.

But as the next day broke he knew that he wanted food, and a sickening desire for it arose within him. But how to get it! In all that big, great city of London, who was there to give meat to this poor stricken lamb? Not one! It was nobody's business! Many men, good men and true, were they *sure* he was starving, could they *see* him, was his miserable case placed exactly beneath their benevolent noses would, I know, have given him sufficient to keep him in clover for the rest of his life. But then it takes so long to bring these miserable cases beneath the noses of the benevolent ones, that myriads die while the attempt is being made, and only one out of the many is saved.

It seemed to him that he must have dozed awhile, as when next his dim eyes looked with discernment upon the world, the darkness of night was falling. The rain, too, was heavier, and through it the lamps that lighted the wretched by-street where he crouched shone with a lurid light.

The little dog was dead, but the child did not know it. I am always glad to think he did not know that. He held

it still fondly, convulsively clasped to his breast, and as the body was yet warm it did not dawn upon his dulled mind that life was gone from it. He sat quite still, his head drooping somewhat forward, and one could see that his face *might* have been pretty but for the stamp of death present, and of misery, now nearly passed, that disfigured it.

By and by, as he still sat there faint and sick because of the ravening and gnawing feeling within him, a young man came swinging down the dingy street—a young man, gaunt to emaciation, with hollow cheeks and deepset eyes, and altogether a face suggestive of famine. It was not a good face! The devil had planted a line here and there in it—cynical curves round the thin lips, a mocking light in the eyes, a matured expression of scorn toward the world in general. He looked as if he were always carrying on a bitter warfare with his kind.

His clothes were threadbare, his hat shocking. Beneath his arm he hugged a handful of shabby books as if his very soul (although he would have scorned a belief in one) was centered on them. As indeed it was. A student evidently; out at elbows, penniless.

"Eh! what have we here?" said he, stopping abruptly before the half-insensible boy and poking him with his stick. "Another starveling! Come, speak up, child; what ails you, eh?"

Roused by this rude address and dreading all things, Jerry lifted his dull eyes and turned a suppliant smile upon his questioner. It was a woful little smile, entreat-

ing, imploring, and openly deprecating the blow that he so plainly expected. All his poor little life long, blows had been his portion.

"So!" said the evil-looking young man with a sinister smile, "starving, eh? I was right, then?" He stared at the child as if musing. "Here, before one, lies a distinct atom of the vast mysterious whole. Here too lies a striking example of the absolute truthfulness of that charming little fable so sweet to the well-fed good man's ear. The Divine mercy! The everlasting love that will not let so much as one sparrow fall to the ground—to which the little ones are so specially dear! Here, I say, is an admirable illustration of it—a wood-cut, let us say, an insignificant etching," with a glance at the miserably shrunken little frame of the child at his feet. He laughed aloud; a laugh that cut like a bit of cold, cruel steel into the heart of the cowering boy. Was the blow coming now?

"You'll die if you don't look sharp," said the strange man, after another prolonged glance at him, followed by a shrug. He thrust his hand into his pocket and brought out three coppers and a sixpenny bit. "Here, catch!" said he, chucking the sixpence to the boy, who by a superhuman effort caught it, and then turned a glance of passionate gratitude up to his unknown friend.

"Don't," said the latter, with his unpleasant laugh. "I expect I've done you the worst turn of any. It was a gross liberty on my part to seek to prolong your days. You will fling that sixpence into the nearest gutter if you have a grain of sense; if not, make it last for two days. It is more than I shall have to live upon for that time."

He paused, and then said, abruptly: "There's a shop round the corner."

The boy had dragged himself up by the lintel of the door, with a view to thanking him properly, in spite of his contemptuous prohibition, but with his last words the young man flung himself round and into the middle of the passing crowd, carrying his eager, wild, accusing face into the turmoil of the great city.

Jerry, still hugging to his breast the dead dog, moved slowly and painfully down the street, turned the corner, and stopped at last before the lighted windows of the cook-shop to which he had been directed. A delicious perfume came from the open door, the window, aglow with gas, showed dainties so coarse to you or me, but so delicate to the famished boy that he almost fainted at the sight of them. For a minute or two he let his gaze feast itself upon the rich display, and then slowly opened his dirty emaciated little hand to look at the talisman that should give him his share of the good things he craved. His silver sixpence lay upon his palm, and the child's eyes grew bright again, half conquering the death-sleep that had so nearly closed them only now, as he stared at it. A whole, *whole* sixpence.

Alas! two other eyes beheld that sixpence at the same moment. A great, rough, villainous-looking creature, half boy, half man, peered over the child's shoulder, saw the coin, stooped yet a little nearer as a hawk above its prey, and then the little dirty palm was empty, the blessed life-giving money *gone!*

Poor Jerry! A sensation as of a deadly chill ran

through him, and for a moment he reeled heavily against the bars of the window. But after that it seemed to him that he thought no more of it, he gave in, and though not conscious of the fact, quietly surrendered himself to death. It was all over. No hope, no life—*nothing* was left! Perhaps, indeed, he scarcely knew how things went with him for awhile, but instinct at least led his dying footsteps back to the old horrible home—the loathsome cellar in the squalid court. With faltering feet, with a dull, stupid despair upon his half-dead little face, with the now cold and stiff puppy pressed to his heart, he descended the stone steps, and, like a wild thing stricken sore, sought his lair.

Inside all was still, all was dark. A horrible silence prevailed, a very blackness of darkness that might be felt. He began to be frightened, horribly frightened. He put the dog down and pressed the palms of his hands tight—*tight* against his eyeballs that he might not see the grewsome shapes of which the dread gloom seemed full. Teeming shapes that changed ever and ever, and drew nearer, and touched him as he thought—sometimes his hair, and now—ah!—now his cheek.

And then the harsh, racking cough, that had been his for a twelvemonth, caught him, and shook his thin little frame so roughly in its rude grasp that he had to take down his hands from his eyes to press them to that side where the pain was most cruel; but he still kept his eyes fast closed lest he should see those weird awful creatures dancing here and there in the obscurity.

He was cold—so cold! He shivered and shook with ter-

ror, and with something else; that last dread icy chill that every moment crept closer and closer to his heart. And after awhile he sat down and let himself fall quietly backward until his poor, tired head lay upon the damp pavement. He put out a feeble hand, and finding the dead dog, mechanically drew it nearer to him.

And then a wonderful thing happened! All at once the cellar, it seemed to him, grew full of light! A light, strange, awful, marvelous, such as you and I have never yet seen. And in it stood—One!

A most gracious figure! Tall, a little bowed, and clad in a long garment, than which no snow, freshly fallen, was ever half so white. And the face—who shall tell the divine fairness of it?

Little Jerry could not have described it then, but as he gazed on it, he knew all at once the fullest meaning of the words "Love" and "Peace" and "Rest."

And the figure stooped and gathered to his breast the little frozen boy, and suddenly a soft delicious glow ran through his numbed veins. And Jerry let his tired head fall gently back against that tender bosom.

And heavier and heavier grew the weary limbs, and then suddenly, oh, so light! and presently he felt himself lifted up—ever upward—and carried away—away.

And never more did little Jerry know cold or hunger or fear or despair, and never again did darkness trouble him, for

"There shall be no night there."

THE END.

"THAT NIGHT IN JUNE."

BY THE "DUCHESS."

"WHAT a charming day, grandmamma!" says Mr. Wilding, walking into the small morning-room in Penywern Road, South Kensington, and directing a genial glance at the faded remains of what once was beauty, reposing in an antiquated arm-chair.

It *is* a charming day. Outside, the sun is beating heavily on road and house and such luckless beings as must walk abroad. The whole earth is bowing before its majesty, going humbly, and imploring with faint gasps a breath of air. Inside, the blinds are all pulled down as though to exclude it, and in the grate a fire—an actual, roaring, maddening fire—is burning.

"Charming, is it?" says grandmamma, declining to see the geniality of her visitor. "*Can* Nature produce a charming day in this age? *I* think it chilly."

She is sitting with her knees well into the fire, and with the grim expression that usually greets her grandson's approach upon her withered lips.

"Why not try a foot-warmer and a fur cloak?" says Mr. Wilding, furtively wiping his brow. "You don't take half care of yourself; and really during the present inclemency—"

"May I ask what has brought you here to-day?" interrupts she, with an amount of ungraciousness difficult to combat. But he is accustomed to her incivility; and as Hecuba is nothing to him, and he is less to Hecuba, he hardly takes it to heart.

"An overpowering desire to see you," he replies, indolently, but with an admirable assumption of amiability.

"Pray spare your gibes when addressing me," says the old lady, tartly. "Keep them for your unfortunate clients, if you have any. Something besides a dutiful consideration for my welfare has brought you here to-day. What is it?"

"What an intelligent person you are, grandmamma," murmurs he, languidly, with what is meant for enthusiasm, but ends in sarcasm. "Concealment with you is impossible. Another—but, of course, a very secondary—motive *has* brought me here this morning. The fact is, I have some stalls for the opera, and I thought perhaps Brenda might like to hear Patti again."

"And to hear her with you alone! Certainly not! Nothing of the sort," says Lady Molyneux, with emphasis. "If that is your mission, George, it is unsuccessful. I shall never give my consent."

"I never dreamed you would," replies the prudent George, who *had* dreamed it fondly, nevertheless. "Josephine will come with us. You can scarcely object to trusting her with her married sister."

"Humph, José? I always say José is only half married, that man makes such a fool of her."

"And even if José were not in question, why should

she not come with me alone?" pursues he, his foot on the fender, his eyes on the repellent old face, so lined and seared with age and querulous discontent. "Surely a cousin may count as a brother any day."

"May it? I don't think so. I can not say how society may regard it in these indecent days, but, in *my* time, one relative was never mistaken for another. Besides, there are cousins *and* cousins."

"And which am I?" asks he, with so much careless indifference as stings her.

"You are your father's son," replies she, bitterly. "No one of the blood ever came to good."

"I can't say you are over-civil," returns he, with a little insolent shrug; and then the door opens, and Brenda herself enters quickly, and with the unpremeditated manner of one who anticipates an empty room. Seeing George, she starts perceptibly, smiles involuntarily, and blushes beautifully.

She is a very pretty girl, of middle height, with large dark eyes, shaded by lengthy lashes, a *riante* mouth, and the dearest little nose in the world.

"Ha! Brenda," says grandmamma, looking round—the blush and ready smile have faded by this time, and are a secret between her and her cousin—"come here."

The girl, having shaken hands with George in a calm, orthodox fashion, goes up to Lady Molyneux's chair, and, standing behind her, leans on the top of it. So standing, her face is hidden from grandmamma.

"I have some tickets for to-night. I want grandmam-

ma to let you come and hear Patti," repeats Wilding, coldly.

Miss Molyneux is preparing to go into ecstasies over this news, when she is stopped by a vigorous gesture of the hand and a frown from her cousin. Changing her rôle on the spot, she says, indifferently:

"I have seen Patti so often. It is good of you, George, to think of me; but really—"

"Eh!" says grandmamma, making a praiseworthy but utterly hopeless effort to turn her neck so as to see the flower-like face bending over her chair. "What is it you say? Not *care?* I beg, Brenda, you will not try to copy the *blasé* airs that distinguish, and render obnoxious, the youth of to-day. I think you *ought* to go. The tickets are bought, and I object to extravagance. Certainly you should go, if it were not for Disney. Is it that you think he would object?" anxiously.

"I was not thinking of Lord Disney," says the girl, proudly.

Wilding is staring very hard at her, and she lowers her eyes, and flushes hotly—she scarcely knows why. Perhaps she fears he may see the repugnance, and detestation, and deep grief that disfigure the beauty of her face.

"Even if Brenda is to marry Lord Disney," says Wilding, calmly, carefully particular about giving him his formal title, "I do not see—"

"*If,*" interrupts the old dame, fiercely, "if indeed!"

"Dost thou answer me with 'ifs'?" says Wilding in a low tone to his cousin, who returns his glance with a faint, a *very* faint smile.

"Of course she will marry him," goes on grandmamma, shrilly. "What! throw even a doubt upon an engagement that has lasted since Brenda was fifteen! an engagement so admirable, so suitable, so splendid with regard to settlements! It is like you, George, to disregard its importance. A girl without a penny; like father, like son; reckless—reckless!"

"Do you think he will break this suitable engagement if Brenda goes to the opera with her sister?" asks Wilding, in an impossible tone.

"I don't know, I'm sure, what he may think of it," says grandmamma, perplexed. "You see Disney in many ways—is—is—eccentric."

"He would be, you know, at his age," says Wilding, slowly.

"What do you mean, George?"

"I mean, eccentricity generally accompanies old age," says Wilding, obstinately.

"He is not old. Certainly not *old*. He is just in his prime."

"So difficult to define that word 'prime,'" murmurs he, provokingly. "But of course I erred. He can't be old. He is even younger than *you*, grandmamma!"

"Perhaps, after all, I may as well see Patti again before the season closes," puts in Brenda, lightly. "As you seem to advise my going, grandmamma, I shall accept George's offer."

"Well, be sure you take my latch-key! I can't have my servants kept up all night," says Lady Molyneux, determined to sustain her unamiability to its dreary end.

"Half past ten is my hour. And as José will be with you, you can let yourself in and go to bed, for one night, without assistance. Core hates late hours." As Core, her ladyship's maid, is virtually mistress of the house, tyrannizing even over the tyrant grandmamma, every one sees the sense of this remark.

"I sha'n't forget, dear," says Brenda, straightening Lady Molyneux's cap, which has gone somewhat awry during the heat of argument.

"Then I suppose the matter has arranged itself," says Wilding, quietly. "Good-bye, grandmamma. I shall see you to-night, Brenda," holding out his hand. She gives him hers, and raises to his eyes luminous and glad. She does not care to conceal from him the satisfaction that warms her heart, as she dwells upon the pleasure that lies before her. Perhaps she hardly knows how dangerously sweet that pleasure is. Is it indeed Patti, or George Wilding's voice, she likes best to hear? She has promised to marry Disney, and she will marry him; of course, that is quite settled. Nothing can alter *that;* but just now—now—for a little while out of all her life, why not be happy?

And José will be with her. Dear José! Nothing can be sweeter than José! Once or twice before she has gone to the opera with her and George, and she has always been so engrossed with the music and so deaf to all other sounds, and so absolutely determined not to enter into conversation of any sort with any one, that Brenda and George might as well have been alone.

"Yes, to-night," she says, softly, and smiles at him again, and sends him away outwardly calm, but with a

heart that curses fate and grandmamma, and, above all, Lord Disney.

* * * * * * *

At the appointed hour he calls for her, and at his command she descends the stair beneath the gas-light, cloak-clad in her prettiest gown, with a soft blue cashmere around her, and on her head the daintiest of swan's-down hoods, from which her eyes look out, dark and misty and loving. Her hair is roaming at its own sweet will across her low broad forehead, her color is somewhat heightened, altogether she looks distractingly pretty as she steps into the night brougham, and they drive away to Cromwell Road to take up José.

Alas! José is not to be taken up! (the expression of sorrow is all my own); upon the stairs, with a huge white, fleecy shawl twisted round her unhappy head, she stands, "like Niobe, all tears."

"It is toothache," she exclaims, in muffled tones. That fiend among pains has laid hold of her, and having her safely in his clutches, refuses to release her without a heavy fine. Fred—her husband—has gone for a dentist to extract this fine.

"And of course it is dreadful, darling, really quite too dreadful, but you see I *can't* go; so George must have sole charge of you to-night."

"Grandmamma will be so angry," says Brenda, nervously.

"Why need she know? Grandmamma is an old bore," says José, with heartfelt meaning. She is very young, and is a person of undeniable spirit; and, as a fact, re-

gards grandmamma with irreverence, and Lord Disney with disgust and openest disdain. "She will never find it out," she goes on, as cheerfully as the fiend in possession will permit her. "If *I* had listened to all her crotchets and world-worn theories a year ago, I shouldn't be married to Fred now. Oh! dear, oh! dear, will he *never* come? This pain is maddening. There, go away, you two. And take great care of her, George. And bring her home directly, you know; and I shall tell Fred to suppress all about the dentist to-morrow."

"It sounds very deceitful, doesn't it?" says poor Brenda.

"It is nothing when you are used to it," replies the married sister.

"And I am safe to be found out; I always am," says Brenda.

"Well, it is all grandmamma's own fault. On her head be it," says José, who seems to enjoy the situation far more than the other two. "Never be a bugbear, Brenda; you see what awful mischief accrues from making one's self a bogey. Oh! I shall go out of my mind if this hateful pain continues much longer. Go away, *do*. And come and see me to-morrow, and tell me all about it."

* * * * * * *

The opera is charming, and Patti excels herself; but time flies, and bright things fade, and soon the curtain drops, and Spanish castles fall; and Brenda, with a sigh, places her hand upon her cousin's arm, and soon they have made their way through the fashionable throng, and are speeding homeward through the deserted streets.

As they arrive at No. 7, some clock in the distance

chimes twelve. They run up the steps, and Brenda puts her hand in her pocket to draw out the latch-key.

"Be sure you don't commit yourself about José's defection," says Wilding; and then he stops short, struck by the change in her face.

"George, did I give you the key?" she asks, in a frightened tone.

"No. It was on the sideboard when we came out. I told you to remember it. Have you not got it?"

"I have not. I never brought it at all. I *must* have given it to you," desperately.

"I am sure you did not."

"Nevertheless, try. Try your pockets. Try every pocket you *have*," says Brenda, miserably.

He does try every pocket, one after the other, but in vain; no key betrays itself anywhere.

"Well, never mind," says George; "we must only put a good face on the matter, and ring up the servants."

"*Ring?* You might ring until morning! You might ring until you were black in the face!" exclaims Brenda, with the impatience of despair, "and nobody could hear you. Why, they all sleep at the very top of the house, beyond all hearing; and grandmamma never will get a bell put to their rooms. What *is* to be done?"

"Come to José."

"José has no servants' bell either, and they all go to bed early," replies Miss Molyneux, on the verge of tears.

"Good gracious," says Mr. Wilding, at last thoroughly roused to a sense of the awfulness of the situation; "what on earth shall we do?"

It is a dark and gloomy night. The "Chaste Diana" has sulked and gone to bed; the stars are nowhere. Not a sound disturbs the silence that envelops the quiet road, except an occasional cough from Fenmore the coachman, who is waiting with the brougham to convey Wilding home, and who sits upon the box the very model of propriety, and never so much as glances in their direction. Perhaps he is wrapped in fond dreams of days gone by when he and Mrs. Fenmore were "a-courting," and has a secret sympathy for the two on the doorstep.

A huge black cat, hideous as a gnome, springs from some dark corner, and with a weird yell rushes across the road and disappears down some area at the opposite side.

"This all comes of doing what I knew was wrong," says Brenda presently, finding her companion silent. "I wish," ungratefully, "you had never asked me to go to that horrible opera."

"I thought she sung very well," alluding to Patti. "And I certainly couldn't be expected to know how things were going to turn out," says Mr. Wilding, somewhat aggrieved.

"You shouldn't have listened to José; you should have brought me straight home. It is all your fault," says Brenda, most unfairly.

"Well, it wasn't I who forgot the latch-key, anyhow," says Mr. Wilding, unwisely incensed.

At this unlucky speech, his cousin, seeing at last a good opening, gives way to bitter reproach.

"Yes, that is just like you," she says, large tears gathering in her lovely eyes. "To upbraid me now, when

I am most unhappy. If *you* were in trouble, George, I would not treat you so."

"Don't speak to me like that," says Wilding, miserably. "I am far more upset about this unfortunate matter than you can be."

"That is impossible. Grandmamma can't look at *you*, as though she meant to devour you in one bite."

"If I had anywhere to take you," goes on George, "any home of my own, with some old aunt at the head of it, for instance. Lots of fellows have aunts who live with them," grudgingly. "But I never saw the aunt that would live with *me;* and of course a bachelor's rooms wouldn't do, not if I paced the streets all night. Why on earth am I not married?" says Mr. Wilding, distractedly.

"Is this a time to talk nonsense?" asks Brenda, with a sudden vehemence. "Of course, if you were married, I should not be here at all, and that would end the whole matter."

She is looking up at him from under the bewitching hood with two angry eyes that say far more than their owner is aware of. Her lips are quivering; two crimson spots enrich each rounded cheek. Wilding, gazing at her extreme beauty, loses his head.

"I am not sure of that," he says, unsteadily. "I think if I were married, you, and you only, would be standing just there."

"George! George! have you forgotten?" entreats she, shrinking from him.

"I have forgotten nothing, not even Disney," returns he, recklessly. "I know you don't care for that ghastly

old corpse, laid out by Poole; how could you? And I love you, darling—*darling*. Forgive me, Brenda; I should not speak to you like this now, and here, but it has been on my heart for so long, and—I can't help it. But, if you will give me even the faintest encouragement, you shall never marry Disney, I swear."

Perhaps he might have said even more, but Miss Molyneux has burst into tears, and has covered her face with her hands, and is sobbing quietly, but bitterly.

"Don't do that, Brenda!" exclaims he, passionately. "I can stand anything but that. Look here," desperately, "something must be done, you know; you can't stay here all night. Wait one moment."

Running down the steps, he touches the devoted Fenmore's elbow, and says something to him in a low tone. An earnest conversation follows. Then comes a faint sound as of silver falling upon silver, and then Wilding returns to his cousin's side.

"Come," he says, quietly taking her hand. "I have arranged for you. There is no help for it, Brenda; you must do as I tell you."

Brenda, still crying silently, suffers herself to be led to the carriage, and together they enter it again, and drive away.

* * * * * * *

At luncheon, next day, Brenda is singularly silent. Lady Molyneux has fortunately asked few questions about last night's proceedings, and Lord Disney—who is with them—disdains to seek information about anything in

which Wilding has had a part. Theodore, Brenda's brother, is also present.

Grandmamma's indifference is all that can be desired; Disney's sullen silence equally happy; and, in fact, all is going merry as a marriage-bell, until Theodore unconsciously, but fatally, lets fall a bomb-shell that blows the blessed calm to atoms.

"I say, Brenda, it was well you forgot your latch-key last night," says this misguided youth, with the utmost *bonhomie*. "I found it on the sideboard after you had left; and but for it could not have let myself in, as I have lost my own."

His sister turns very white.

"Brenda's—*my* latch-key, you mean," says grandmamma, quickly. "But you dream, Theodore; Brenda had it with her at the opera; she herself could not have got in without it."

Brenda casts an anguished glance at Theodore, who is—and, what is worse, looks—distinctly puzzled.

"Explain, Brenda. You surely had it," says grandmamma, in a voice that admits of no evasion.

Disney, laying down his knife and fork, gazes with half-closed eyes at the embarrassed girl.

"Had what, grandmamma?" asks she, faintly, to gain time.

"What? The latch-key. Are you deaf?" says grandmamma.

Brenda is silent. Lies are at any time abhorrent to her, and now to tell one will be useless, as her hesitation has been marked.

"Brenda, speak!" says grandmamma, in an awful tone. "You had it with you?"

"Of course she had! What a fuss about nothing. It must have been my own I found," breaks in Theodore, lying valiantly, but vainly.

"I had not, grandmamma," says Brenda, bravely, but in accents hardly intelligible.

"Then, pray, how did you come in last night?"

"I did not come in at all," replies Brenda, in an agony. "Grandmamma, listen, let me explain—"

But grandmamma is quite past explanation. She has risen, and is standing with both her old withered hands pressed upon the table, as though to support her under this crowning horror, and is glaring at the terrified child with fierce, dark eyes.

"Am I to understand," she says, "that you spent last night out of my house?"

"If you would let me speak," says Brenda, sobbing.

"Answer me, wretched girl. Were you with your sister?"

"No. She—"

"Not here, nor with your sister, but with George Wilding, I presume. Hah! Not another word! I always knew what would come of your intimacy with that degraded young man."

"This is all shocking—shocking," says Lord Disney, in his slow, aggravating manner. "And—er"—brilliantly—"*shocking!* Of course, Miss Molyneux, this young man—your cousin—having found more favor in your sight than I have been fortunate enough to find, I beg to resign

my present position, and withdraw from an engagement which no doubt is irksome to you. You will pardon me, Lady Molyneux, if I say this is all very sad, *very* sad"—with an elaborate bow.

"Sad! it is disgraceful! Go, girl, to your room, and stay there until I decide on what shall be done with you. My roof shall no longer cover one so lost to all sense of—"

Theodore, rising abruptly, goes to his sister's side and passes his arm round her.

"Look here, grandmamma, stop all that," he says, with a frown; "it might do at the 'Duke's,' but it is out of place here, and I won't have Brenda abused."

Here some one, with a grateful smile, removes his arm from Brenda's waist, and places his own there instead. It is George Wilding, who has entered unannounced; just a minute or two before a small, plain woman, who appears, and stands unnoticed in the door-way, with a pretty swan's-down cloak and hood upon her arm, that contrasts oddly with her own meaner garments.

"Who is abusing Brenda?" demands George Wilding, looking quietly upon the assembled group, yet with a curious light in his eyes that marks him dangerous in his present mood. "Who is casting even the faintest slur upon her? He shall answer to me for it."

He stares coldly, and somewhat insolently, at Lord Disney as he speaks, and that discreet nobleman, dropping his eyeglass, discovers a difficulty in finding it again.

"I've made some beastly mistake, you know. It is all my fault," says Theodore, with extreme contrition.

Here the plain little woman in the door-way, perceiving a lull in the conversation, comes timidly forward.

"Please, Miss Molyneux, I have brought you your opera-cloak," she says, "as I feared you might be wanting it again to-night."

"Oh, thank you," says Wilding, turning to her promptly. "Perhaps, Mrs. Fenmore, as you are here, you will kindly tell Lady Molyneux of all your goodness to Miss Brenda last night. How you took her in, and made her very comfortable in your own house, when—because of the stupidity of the arrangements in *this* house—she found herself out in the cold; and how you yourself brought her safely back here this morning."

"Oh! I'm sure, my lady," says the coachman's wife, dropping a courtesy, "I'm only sorry I couldn't do more for Miss Molyneux. I doubt she was desperate uncomfortable, my lady; but I did my best."

"What is all this?" says grandmamma. "I fail to understand; and riddles are an abomination to me."

"When we found it impossile to ring up your servants, and knew the latch-key had been forgotten, I took Brenda to Mrs. Fenmore's house, where, if not exactly in a Belgravian mansion, she was at least as safe as in the home of a duchess," with a kind bow to Mrs. Fenmore. "Don't cry, Brenda, tears are too sacred to be wasted on such a miserable occasion as the present."

"Did Miss Molyneux sleep in your house last night?" asks Lady Molyneux, addressing the coachman's wife, and insolently giving Wilding to understand she refuses to credit his story unsupported.

"Yes, my lady; she came to me a little after twelve o'clock, and proud I was, my lady, to be of the least service to her. I brought her back myself this morning, which I hope, miss"—respectfully to Brenda—"you didn't catch cold, and are none the worse for your strange bed; which Fenmore do say that change of sheets at any time is most dangerous."

"I am quite well, and I thank you very much, Mrs. Fenmore," says Brenda, in a stifled tone. As her face is pressed against George's gray coat, this is hardly cause for wonder.

"As for you, sir," says Wilding, turning to the discomfited lord, "having heard you with my own ears decline the honor of an alliance with this young lady, I beg to tell you it was just as well you did so—it saves trouble, as she had not the smallest intention of marrying you."

"*Sir!*" exclaims the aristocratic fossil, taking fire at this insult.

"No, sir, not the smallest," repeats Wilding, contemptuously; "she has the good—I mean, of course, the bad—taste to prefer me, which, after all, when one comes to think of it, is only natural. What bond *could* there be between May and December?"

"Brenda—" begins grandmamma, with much wrath.

"Go and put on your things, Brenda," interrupts George, sternly. "I shall take you to your sister. Go, my love," in a fond whisper to the trembling girl, who at the word escapes gladly from the room. "You, madame, have behaved infamously to her," goes on George, determined to carry things with a high hand. "And when you

said she should never sleep another night beneath your roof, you spoke the truth. José will receive her, and she shall stay with her until I marry her. I will not have her heart broken. If you wish to apologize to her for this morning's conduct, you can see her at Cromwell Road."

Having made this galling suggestion, he has the good sense to beat an instant retreat.

"I must say I think you deserve every bit of it," says Theodore to this stricken granddame. "You have acted toward Brenda for the last two years like a regular old Tartar, and here's the end of it."

"Leave the room, you wicked boy," commands grandmamma, in a shrill tone; and Theodore for once obliges her, more, I think, because he wishes to go than from any high sense of duty.

"And I have always borne with that boy, and humored him in every respect," says Lady Molyneux, mopping her eyes indignantly. "To say *I* deserved such treatment; *I*—"

"I can't help saying I agree with Theodore," says Lord Disney, solemnly, with aggravating slowness.

"*Eh!*" says grandmamma, instantly putting down the handkerchief, and turning to face the enemy with renewed vigor, as she scents hostility in a fresh and unexpected quarter.

"Yes, yes! You have acted abominably," goes on Disney, who is evidently not afraid of an old woman. "You have accused that charming young lady, your granddaughter, of an indiscretion she would scorn to com-

mit. You have jumped at conclusions, and it's—it's—it's execrable form, madame, to jump at conclusions."

"'Form!'" says grandmamma, witheringly; "what is it you mean by that? Is it the 'human form divine' you are mumbling about? or is it slang you are using? If so, I think it most unbecoming in any one of *our* age to ape the vile manners of the present day."

This is a cruel shaft; and the elderly beau, in spite of Poole, and Hoby, and Rimmel, winces perceptibly.

"You should have investigated matters before going too far," says he, somewhat depressed.

"So should you," retorts she; "you were in a vast hurry, methinks, to relinquish your bride."

"I blame you for it all," returns he, fiercely.

"Tut, man! Don't think *I* care for either your blame or censure," says this indomitable old dame, regarding him scornfully. "George Wilding will marry her now, and that puts a finish to it. And I'm not sure I'm not glad of it. Demanding your pardon, Disney, I begin to think he is the better man of the two?"

"Your opinion, madame, is, of course, indisputable," with a low bow. "But yet I flatter myself your granddaughter was willing enough to become Lady Disney, until you—"

"Did you ever hear of young Lochinvar?" asks grandmamma, with a maddening cackle; "it reminds me somewhat of your case. And what was that George Wilding said about 'May and December?' Ha—ha—good, *very* good!"

"You are an odious old woman!" says my lord, losing all patience.

"Eh!—where's your vaunted manners, Disney? your courtly bow—your incomparable smile? I will trouble you to leave this room this instant," says she, striking her gold-headed cane upon the floor with considerable force.

"I obey you, madame, willingly; and now take my leave of it, and of the house, and of you too, I hope, *forever*," returns he, furiously.

And, striding up the room and through the hall, passes beyond the portals of No. 7—never to return.

THE END.

A WRONG TURNING.

BY THE "DUCHESS."

"DEAR fellow! so glad to see you! But what a godless hour to arrive at. After twelve! You must be frozen!" cries Oswald Travers, all in one breath, as he rushes down the stone steps to welcome his cousin. "Here, Higgins," to the butler, "see to Captain Dugdale's luggage. By Jove! what a night!"

"Couldn't come a second sooner," says Dugdale, springing from the dog-cart and shaking the snow from his shoulders. "Thought up to the last I shouldn't be able to come at all. As it is, I've run it rather fine, eh? This is the 23d, and—"

"The 24th, my good friend; Christmas-eve already. Here, come along, you must be positively famished."

"Well, I *could* eat something," says Dugdale, laughing, and following him into the grand old hall, still ablaze with lights, and with two roaring fires in it that seem determined to defy the wintery cold without.

"Sir George and the *mater*, and all the respectable members of the household, are in bed," says Oswald, the eldest son of the name. "The more frivolous ones are still in the billiard-room. But we can give them a wide berth for this night, at all events, as I expect you are

tired; and, besides, I want a word or two with you alone. My father had quite given you up—you are so late. Come along, and let me show you your room while they are preparing some supper for you. Higgins, which is Captain Dugdale's room?"

"Blue chamber, sir, east wing."

"All right. I say, old man," says Oswald, apologetically, stopping midway upstairs to look back at his cousin, "I hope you won't mind, but you know what Sir George is at Christmas-time. He will ask *everybody* all at once, and this time he has so outdone himself that we have been obliged to double-bed some of the larger rooms. They've put one of the young Ormsbys into yours; a quiet lad, nineteen or so, steady, respectable, warranted not to bite, but rather a bore for you, nevertheless, I'm afraid."

"Warranted not to snore would be more to the purpose," says Dugdale, laughing.

"At all events, it will only be for a day or two, as the Ponsonbys and the Blakes leave directly after Christmas. I'm awfully sorry about it, but you know my father is incorrigible—never happy unless he has the house in an overflowing state. We have even had to put some of the girls in rooms with two beds to get space for the others."

"Well, it's large enough to admit of half a dozen beds," says Dugdale, good-naturedly, as he enters the blue chamber and warms his hands thankfully before the huge fire burning in the grate. As he speaks he looks round him; it is, indeed, a charming room, handsomely furnished and as comfortable as the soul of man could desire. The extra bed, with hanging curtains of pale blue, to

match the rest of the furniture, has been pushed into a corner, so as to take as little as possible from the grandeur of the "regular" bedstead that stands with its back up against the central wall of the apartment, as though resenting the intrusion of the foreigner.

"Well, hurry up, and let's get down to the dining-room," says Oswald; "I've a lot to say to you."

So much, indeed, that the night is far advanced before his say is said; the fact that he has lately become engaged to the "dearest girl in the world" having a good deal to do with this protracted conversation. Three o'clock has struck, and the distant sounds of merriment that reached them from the billiard-room have long since died into nothingness, when at length Dick Dugdale, rising from his chair, declares with a yawn that sleep has mastered him.

He is a tall, lean, soldierly young man of about twenty-nine, with a singularly handsome face, and a skin browned by India's suns. He has, indeed, only just returned from the East—a good deal the slighter for his sojourn there—and being heart-whole, and next heir to a baronetcy, has been, during the past week, the subject of some speculation among the women assembled at Travers Court.

"You won't lose your way, will you?" says Oswald, as he bids him good-night on coming to a landing where their roads separate. "You know the house too well for that."

"I *should*," says Dugdale, laughing. "This house has been my home too often to let a few years destroy all memory of it."

He goes softly down the corridor that leads to his room, calling out a last subdued good-night, and walking deli-

cately as Agag might, lest he should disturb the slumberers on either hand. A vague suspicion that perhaps after all he *doesn't* know his own room as well as he had believed, rouses a mingled sense of consternation and amusement in his mind, so that when he comes to his door he opens it cautiously and not without a certain sense of trepidation.

All right, however! The large chamber presents itself to him in colors blue as the sky; the fire still burns as cheerily upon the hearth as it did three hours ago. Capital servants the Travers always *have* kept, by the way; unless, indeed, the present glowing furnace is to be attributed to the zeal of his sleeping partner in this room. By the way, what sort is he?

Flinging the coat he has just taken off upon a chair near him, he turns his gaze upon the bed at the furthest end of the room—the bed in the corner; the bed appropriated to the steady, quiet, respectable, nineteen-year-old lad, warranted not to bite, of whom Oswald had spoken in such glowing terms, to find it—empty. Mechanically he directs his attention upon the bed proper to find it—full!

Why, confound that Ormsby boy! Was there ever such impertinence—such sybaritish selfishness? His heart, however, melts within him as he gazes upon what there is to be seen of this model of iniquity. What a *small* head! with what a wealth of curling hair! A mere boy it must be, in sore want of a barber.

A timid boy, too, evidently afraid of ghosts or such like midnight visitants, as he has tucked the clothes right round his head, and *almost* over his head. A mere child

he must be, with brows as white as that, and with breathing so soft, so noiseless, that one might well believe him dead.

Dead! Dugdale had heard of corpses being discovered in double-bedded rooms before this; it is, indeed, quite an orthodox good old story; but to have it come *home* to him in this abrupt way is not half so pleasant as the mild imagining of it. To read of a tragedy is one thing; to be mixed up with it is quite another.

Taking up the candle, he advances quickly toward the bed, and looks down upon the owner of those short brown curls.

Great Heaven! what is this? By a miracle alone Dugdale prevents the candlestick from falling with a crash to the floor; by a miracle, too, he represses the exclamation that rises to his lips. The steady, respectable Ormsby boy, "warranted not to bite," has resolved himself into—*a girl!*

And such a lovely girl, too! The little, pretty, soft, disheveled curls, brown as hazel-nuts, are lying on a forehead white as Parian marble. The rounded cheeks are flushed with sleep's fond heat, the long dark lashes lying on them making a tender contrast with the crimson ground beneath; the lips, red as cherries ripe, are softly, indolently closed. It occurs to him that they might open at any moment, and then—

Well, THEN! not the lips, but the eyes open. Large, dark eyes, heavy with slumber scarcely broken, and for an instant they gaze straight up at him, vaguely troubled—softly uncertain. Up to this point Dugdale has been

rooted to the spot. To say that he is filled with amazement would be but to give a poor explanation of his feelings, that he is frightened to death would be far nearer to it. Now, seeing those half-conscious eyes on his, he gives way altogether.

Hastily extinguishing the tell-tale candle, he makes a dash for his coat, and then for the door, and rushes blindly down the now dark corridor. Toward the end, seeing a light gleaming from one of the apartments, he makes for it in desperation, and—yes—thank Heaven, there are two beds here also, the room is distinctly blue; he must have found his haven at last.

Sinking into a chair, he presses his hand to his forehead, and listens with all his might. Will she scream? rouse the house? Has she mistaken him for a burglar? Or—blessed hope!—has she been so little awakened that his rapid exit may have left her under the impression that all she saw was but the outcome of a dream?

Somewhat relieved by this thought, he prepares once more for bed. *This* time, at all events, he has made no mistake; the loud and healthy snores that come from the couch in the corner preclude the smallest possibility of doubt. All then may yet be well. That one hasty glance of hers could have told her nothing, and there is no other clew. Placing his fingers in his waistcoat pocket to take out his watch, he at once grows rigid with consternation and a look of horror overspreads his face! His watch! He has left it behind him! It is probably at this moment ticking away—with quite disgraceful indifference to its owner's agony—upon *her* table! Alas! for that dream

theory of his! Dreams come and go, but leave nothing tangible behind them.

* * * * * * *

"I say, where's Lilian?" asks Oswald, looking up from the game-pie he is discussing. "Not like her to be late."

"No; she is generally up to time," says Lady Rattleton, a lively looking blonde, casting a sharp glance all round the breakfast-table. "She didn't like that beating you gave her at billiards last night, perhaps, or else for once in her life she is lazy."

"Wrong in both surmises," says Lady Travers, glancing from behind the huge silver urn, as the door opens, and a little slight girl, almost child-like in face and form, comes into the room. Very nervously she comes forward, changing from white to red, and from red back again to white, as she does so. "Well, Lily, come at last, dear?"

Dugdale's heart gives a big jump. That pretty head, with its short, nut-brown curls, harmless as it seems, strikes terror to his soul. He grows almost vehement in his attentions to his left-hand neighbor—a gaunt old maid with spectacles. Anything rather than meet the eyes of this little hesitating new-comer.

"Glad you've come, Lilian. We were just going to have the lake dragged."

"Really, Miss Englethorpe, you should give us notice when you intend to retire into private life. The anxiety we have undergone up to this would—"

"Slept it out, Lil?" questions her brother, a tall guardsman, who is at the sideboard busy with a ham.

"She looks rather as if she hadn't slept at all," says

Sir George Travers, her kindly host, drawing a chair up close to his own, and beckoning her to come to him.

"That room is haunted," says Augusta, the eldest daughter of the house; "I *warned* you about it, Lil. Well, what did you see? Who entered your room last night? Let us hear the ghastly details?"

Poor Miss Englethorpe! Dugdale's heart dies within him as he sees the cruel crimson that, rising, colors her cheeks.

"By Jove! I think you've hit it," says her brother, mightily amused by this blush. (Brothers ARE such brutes!)

"Come, tell us, Lily! The actual person who sees a ghost is so much preferable to the person who knows somebody else who has seen a ghost. Was it a man?"

Good-breeding so far stands to Miss Englethorpe that, though now deadly pale, she refuses further to betray herself. As for Dugdale, gazing on that brave little face, he feels as if he *must* rise and say something. But *what?* That is the question that reduces him to absolute nothingness.

"Had he his head under his arm?" persists Lady Rattleton, with the loud laugh that is commonly, and rather justly, supposed to proclaim the vacant mind.

"Or a dripping sword, perchance," says the guardsman, who, being her brother, is of course the last man in the world to ever dream of looking at her.

"Come, come, come," cries Sir George, quickly. "A truce to all such idle jests. Can't you see that the little one has a headache? A cup of tea for her, Oswald, *that*

will exorcise the demon, I hope! Have you seen the last about these Whitechapel murders? Eh?—eh? Such a disgrace as they are to civilization." And so on. The good old host compels them all to follow him far away from Miss Englethorpe and her worries.

"Now, once for all, we *must* be in time to decorate the church," says Augusta Travers presently, who is commonly supposed to be an admirer of the rector's—a happy, *un*—married man! "We have only this one clear day before us, and we'll hardly get our work through before Christmas dawns."

"What hour are we to meet at the church?"

"Half past eleven, sharp."

"And it is now— By Jove! what *is* it, now, by anything reliable?" asks Oswald, staring at the clock on the mantel-piece, that points stolidly to twenty past two. "That clock has gone down. I say, Dugdale, you are the last comer from the seat of war; give us the news—the time."

We have all heard of the word "limp." It, and it only, describes Dugdale at this moment.

"Eh?" says he, with a view to gaining time. An awful consciousness that two large brown eyes are at this instant fixed upon him renders him almost paralyzed.

"My dear fellow, straight from town as you are, you can of course give us the right time."

"There you overrate my strength," says Dugdale, recovering himself by a supreme effort. "The fact is, I was so tired last night that I forgot to wind my watch,

and when I looked at it this morning I found it had meanly run down. So sorry!"

He quite forgets to hope that Heaven will forgive him this pious fib in his anxiety to see how *she* has taken it. She has evidently taken it most satisfactorily. The white and frightened face that was turned on him a moment since now looks half relieved. That "*I looked at it this morning,*" had been very clever; she had accepted it as the noble truth. She is still timid, unnerved, but her glances are no longer directed specially toward him; they are divided among the other men sitting all round the table.

As they rise from the latter, Augusta comes up to Dugdale.

"I think you and Miss Englethorpe are the two people unknown to each other here," says she. "That should be a bond of union between you," she laughs, the little unctuous laugh peculiar to stout people, and introduces Dugdale to Lilian.

"Now don't be half a century getting into your walking things," says she to Miss Englethorpe. "You have a big day's work before you in the church. Persuade Captain Dugdale to give you his assistance and you will make the parish your friend forever."

At this, Miss Englethorpe says a word or two as in duty bound, and Captain Dugdale answers her. The result being that the former finds herself behind a pair of ponies half an hour later with the latter holding the reins. This conjunction brings them speedily to the church doors,

where divers spoken plans for celebrating Christmas are making the air loud.

Miss Englethorpe, being of an energetic turn of mind, soon separates herself from the idle members of the flock and gives herself up to the working section thereof.

Holly, ivy and certain hot-house plants sent in from the conservatories around are scattered profusely about the altar and all down the aisles. The rector, clad in distinctly mundane garments, is moving about briskly from pillar to post, giving instructions to the unlearned—a large class.

Quite toward the end of the afternoon Miss Englethorpe, finding herself alone at the base of the pulpit with an ivy wreath in her hands that cries aloud for some resting-place, looks round her and sees at a distance Dugdale. He is coming toward her, and smiles as he meets her eyes, but what is there about him that kills the answering smile that had risen to her lips? Dugdale gives a hasty side-glance at himself and finds he is in his shirt-sleeves—having flung off his coat awhile ago to go to work with a greater zeal. Good heavens! he was in his shirt-sleeves that last, that *first* time she saw him! Could it be possible that a remembrance of that unfortunate moment is slowly wakening within her? What if she should ever arrive at a *certainty* about that fatal mistake of his?

Making a hasty snatch at his coat, he flings that unoffending garment over the tell-tale shirt with quite an angry air, and turns once more to Miss Englethorpe.

"Now, what can I do for you?" says he, with as un-

concerned a manner as he can assume at so short a notice, and with his heart beating to such a violent degree.

"Nothing, thank you," returns she, icily, moving abruptly away, and then, as if ashamed of her petulance, or not knowing positively that she has reason for it, she looks round at him. "Well, there is this," she says, with hesitation, glancing at her wreath; "where shall I put it?"

"I'll show you," says he, briskly, a weight lifted from his heart. After all she does *not* know. And what a lovely face it is that now is looking into his, not, however, without a strange suppressed anxiety, that might be called doubt, visible in it.

To combat this doubt he makes the object of his life for the next half hour, and has congratulated himself that he has succeeded, when suddenly Miss Englethorpe puts hope on that subject to flight.

"What o'clock is it?" asks she, *so* nervously that it is impossible not to notice her agitation. Dugdale makes a laudable effort to conquer the situation, and fumbles in the pocket where that confounded watch *should* be as thoroughly as though he honestly believes it is there to be found.

"Oh, by Jove! of *course*," says he, "I forgot I hadn't wound it last night, and that it still lies on my table. Let me tell you a secret," speaking very carefully, but rather fast. "I am one of those fellows, you know, who *hate* a watch and never wear 'em, if they can get out of it."

"No, I don't know any of them," says Miss Englethorpe, slowly. He can feel her eyes upon his face, and

after a swift glance knows that they are full of tears, frightened, *shamed* tears! Her whole soul is in these anxious eyes, and he understands instinctively that it is the uncertainty of it all that is so terribly distressing to her. He feels like a murderer as he sees the tears, and he feels too, with greater justice, that he is developing into a most consummate liar.

"Well, now you know *one*," says he, with what he tells himself is quite an awful sprightliness. "A watch to me is a bore, hardly to be endured. Just now and again it is a useful thing, I dare say, but as a rule— I should not wonder, for instance, if you never saw me with mine the whole time I am here."

"What a pity! Is—is it a nice watch?" asks Miss Englethorpe, with what he is pleased to see somewhat recovered spirits.

"Far from it," promptly. "Beastly old thing; silver. My father gave it to me or I shouldn't carry it with me at all."

Alas! for the generosity of that good father, whose gift had most assuredly been golden.

But Lilian (he has already, even at this early stage of their acquaintance, begun to so designate her) is for the time satisfied, and what is a father in comparison with a pretty girl? For the rest of the evening everything goes smoothly between her and Dugdale, and the next day, Christmas-day, passes without a hitch, and is indeed remembered by both long afterward as having been the happiest they had ever spent. If at times Miss Englethorpe feels little icy thrills of fear stealing over her as she thinks

of that watch lying *perdu* beneath her laces upstairs (she had been afraid to put it in her jewel-case, the girls in the house having quite a mania for overhauling that charming receptacle), she resolutely puts such fears behind her, and, with as good courage as she can, enjoys the present. Sooner or later she knows she will have to stand face to face with her midnight visitor, will have to return that watch, and thereby bring utter confusion upon her head; but until then, let her be happy. Her one devout prayer, incessantly breathed, is—that whoever it is that terrible apparition may resolve itself into, it will *not* be Dugdale. Oh, no, not Captain Dugdale; *any* one but him; and surely, it couldn't be he. She has his own word for it, or nearly so. *His* watch—that mysterious one he hates so much, that seemingly no man has ever yet seen—is silver, while hers—that is—*his*—that is—the WRETCH'S—is gold! No; he, Captain Dugdale, would not willfully deceive her, and yet— Always an unwelcome doubt remains behind.

Aid to this doubt is given from the most unexpected sources. Human spite has nothing to do with it, as no one can possibly know anything about the fiasco save she and—that other. Some impalpable imp must have taken it in hand, and found its pleasure in tormenting her. The first shock had come at that memorable breakfast; the second, when she had seen Dugdale for the first time (*was* it the first time?) in his shirt-sleeves in the church; the third arose out of the *tableaux vivants* that the Travers girls would get up. These doubts have all to do with Dugdale, but besides these she is harassed with speculations as to other guests in the house. Dugdale apparently

is not the only one who does not possess, or can't at all events produce, a watch. The Hon. Bertie Lightwood, a near-sighted little mortal, more dead than alive, never wears one, and George Hardup, a stalwart dragoon, *says* he has left his in town to be repaired."

In the tableaus it so happens that Miss Englethorpe and Captain Dugdale are cast for the scene from Tennyson's "Sleeping Beauty," where the latter is roused from her sleep of a hundred years by a kiss from the wandering prince. The other tableaus had gone off pretty well. Lady Rattleton indeed, as Diana Vernon, had scored a distinct success, and Oswald Travers with his *fiancée*, a gentle little thing, with intelligent eyes, were very well thought of as "Una and the Lion;" there had indeed been some difficulty about the get-up of Oswald as that remarkable beast—*he* was the lion—but when he had been smothered in two bear, three opossum, and one leopard-skin, he was considered a very creditable article indeed. He was at all events unique of his kind, and that is everything.

But a little whisper has got about that "The Sleeping Beauty" is to be the event of the evening, and now, as the curtain slowly (and with several heart-stirring checks), rises, rumor for the third or fourth time proves true. Beyond all doubt Miss Englethorpe *is* a beauty! Every man in the room, and even a few women, acknowledge this undeniable fact.

Lying there upon the crimson-covered couch in her delicate white robes, with her nut-brown curls nestling among the red velvet of the cushions, Lilian Englethorpe looks lovely as a happy dream. The exquisite face is colorless,

save for the scarlet lips and the dark lashes lying on the oval cheek. Had that dead-past beauty of olden time, so dear to fairy lore and poets, been *half* so fair as this her modern representative, no wonder the Prince lost his head, but gained his courage, and made her his by that revivifying kiss!

So thinks Dugdale, as, compelled by his part—but yet a very willing servant—he bends over her. How sweet she looks! How kind! Yet if she knew all, would she not spurn him? *All*—yet how little! How delicately the lashes lie upon that perfect cheek! Oh! that the curtain might stay up forever! Oh! that he dared, as did that old-world lover, to stoop and kiss and wake her into a new life—a life of love for him!

The curtain, however, like time, takes heed of no man. Down it comes with a little bang; so suddenly that Dugdale, lost in his trance of admiration, forgets all about it. It is only when the large dark eyes open and look straight up into his impassioned ones that the fact of its descent dawns upon him. That fact, and another too. With a little sharp exclamation, Miss Englethorpe springs to her feet, flings back the crimson coverings that had partially covered her, and for a moment stands pale, defiant, horror-stricken before him. What is she thinking of? *What?* It seems to him in the midst of his consternation that he *knows!* Again, he sees himself in that blue chamber looking down upon the sleeping girl. Again she wakes. Again her eyes uplift themselves to his—as they do now.

Miss Englethorpe has taken a step nearer to him; she has lifted her hand as though she would have spoken to him.

There is in the strange deep glance of her eyes something of absolute agony. Her lips part.

All at once she turns aside, her hand falls to her side, and abruptly, nay brusquely, she passes him by, and disappears by the amateur wing.

Dugdale, who has grown a little pale, is the only one left to receive the plaudits of the assembled county.

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She puts in no appearance at breakfast next morning, and Dugdale's heart sinks lower within him (if that be possible). Late in the afternoon, at the five-o'clock tea, that seems to delight everybody, but at which *She* (really he has begun to regard her, so far as name is concerned, almost as the heroine of Mr. Haggard's novel) is also absent, and strolling leisurely into the library where this mild dissipation is, as a rule, carried out to its bitter end, Dugdale becomes aware of that crushing fact. He has hardly had his own cup, however, which neither cheers nor inebriates him, when a door opening on his left causes him to turn.

Yes, it is she. But a very pale and nervous she. A "she," too, fighting evidently against odds, that are of a spiritual nature and not open to the public. Dugdale, looking at her, feels puzzled.

His ignorance, however, is of short continuance. Miss Englethorpe has not been two minutes in the room when somebody—Lady Rattleton, of course—says loudly:

"Whose watch is this?" As she speaks she lifts a gold watch from a small table at her elbow, with chain attached, and holds it up, as if for auction, to those around.

Dugdale's heart grows still. That it is his watch goes without telling. That *she*, unable longer to endure the suspense, unable, too, to retain so valuable an article, has at last decided on braving the worst, is clear to him. She had come in, had laid that vile time-piece upon the table, unseen by any one, and now, when all the guests are assembled, is waiting to learn—*the truth.*

Well, she sha'n't hear it from him, at all events.

"A fine thing! a very fine thing! And who is the owner of this fine thing?" cries Lady Rattleton in her shrill tones, dangling the watch to and fro, and challenging all men present. "Yours, Oswald? No? Yours, Mr. Lightwood? Yours, Sir George?" to her host. "No, *really?* It looks like an heir-loom. Well, come, it *must* be yours, Captain Dugdale."

For a moment Dugdale hesitates; it is a hesitation so slight as to be almost unfel; but in the most infinitesmal space of time quite a train of thoughts can present themselves. If he repudiates the watch now he can never claim it again, and it is an old friend, the companion of many a year, and dear to him, as inanimate things sometimes will be. But not to deny all knowledge of it, with those large searching eyes gazing at him from the other end of the room, waiting breathlessly as it seems for his answer, is impossible to him.

"Mine? No," says he, shaking his head, with a smile.

"Must belong to some of the other fellows. They'll claim it when they come in," says Oswald, indifferently, as Lady Rattleton puts back the watch on the table where she had found it. Dugdale breathes more freely, and lets his

glance turn to where Lilian has but just been standing. She has gone into the embrasure of the window, however, and is sitting there on a pile of cushions, chatting with apparent gayety with a young man, who is holding a tea-cup for her. She has not disbelieved him, then? Once again he has escaped detection. Surely she could not laugh like that if she doubted. Yet—strange perversity! he almost wishes she *had* doubted, that she *knew*, that it was all over, and she had forgiven him. A growing dislike to the young man to whom she is making herself so agreeable, mingled with a sort of discomfort, hardly to be placed, induces him to leave the gay party round the tea-table and wander somewhat aimlessly into the music-room, a charming apartment, hung with pale-pink cretonne, and with a huge bow-window facing south.

At this hour of the day it is sure to be deserted and free from fear of chance visitors. Glad in this thought, Dugdale stands moodily in the window, chewing the cud of several bitter thoughts, when a light but hurried step behind causes him to turn. *Who* can be coming now?

It seems to him that he hardly knows her, as she stops short before him, her lips parted and her breath coming and going so rapidly that it almost appears to hurt her. Her agitation is so extreme that involuntarily he puts out his hand as though to support her, but she shrinks from him.

"Here," she says. "Take it. There is no reason you should lose it because—because of me!"

It is his watch she is offering him! Losing his head a little—his agitation now being even greater than her own

—he would once more have denied all knowledge of it; but she restrains him.

"Oh, no, *no*, NO!" she cries, with sudden, intense passion. "Do not say it again. It is useless. I *know!* I think I have known it all along."

She places the watch upon an ottoman near her, and makes a movement toward the door. Something tells him that if she goes now it will be forever. With a touch of desperation in his manner he gets before her, and places his back against the door.

"Do not go like this," says he, his face as white as her own. "Let me say a word or two. Just *hear* me! After all, what was it? Lilian, let me speak."

He has put out both his hands and tried to take hers, but with a sharp little gesture she repulses him, and then —all at once as it were—she covers her face and breaks into a wild and bitter fit of crying; not loud sobs, but low and heavy, that shake all her slender frame. Turning abruptly from him, as though ashamed of this uncontrollable outburst, she hurries behind the curtains of the window, and leaning against the wood-work, cries as despairingly as a broken-hearted child.

"Is it worth such grief as this?" says Dugdale, miserably, following her into the embrasure of the window. "It was only a mistake, when all is told. Mine—and an inexcusable one if you will—but not worth one of these cruel tears. I can't think *how* it happened; how I was so stupid, but—"

"Don't speak of it. I can't bear it," cries she, with a stamp of her small foot.

"Far better speak of it and be done with it forever," says Dugdale. "You have been making a mountain out of a mere mole-hill, and if you won't let me show it to you as it really is, you will go on being miserable about it always."

"Very well; I'd *rather* be miserable," says Miss Englethorpe from behind her handkerchief, "though," with another sob, "if I am to be as miserable as this always, I shall soon die; that's *one* comfort."

"Not to me," says Dugdale. "Have you no pity for me? Do you think *I* have suffered nothing? That every nervous glance of yours has not been an agony to me? If I deserved punishment for my offense, which truly was an innocent one, why! I have endured it a thousand times. If you could forgive me now—if—"

"Oh! if it had been any one but *you!*" says she, so naïvely, with such an unconscious betrayal of her real feeling for him that Dugdale's heart beats high. Emboldened by this veiled admission, he very gently takes her in his arms, and presses her head down upon his shoulder.

"Why, if it had been, so much the worse," says he, quickly. "You and I can keep the secret to ourselves, can we not? Lilian, may I tell you now what you surely know already, but what I want so badly to put into words! I love you! Darling, *darling*, do you think you can like me—enough—to marry me?"

"Well, if it hadn't been for *that*," says she, despondently; but considering she turns *to* him instead of *from* him as she makes this disheartening speech, Dugdale is not so much crushed by it as he ought to have been.

"If it hadn't been, you *could* have liked me?" asks he, gently.

"Oh, what's the good of talking of it *now?*" says she, with a heavy sigh.

"Not much," says Dugdale, mournfully. "But just for argument's sake, answer me."

"Well—yes," reluctantly.

"Then," says Dugdale, with a base descent into ordinary gladness, "I shall insist on your liking me now, too, in spite of that unfortunate—"

"Oh!" cries she, hastily, "don't mind that." She lifts one hand and lays it on his lips. "It is something else I want to talk to you about. Do you think, a—that is—that one person could ever love another person, when those two persons have only seen each other for ten days?"

"If you and I are those two persons—yes," says Dugdale, with deep conviction.

"It is a very short time," says she, doubtfully.

"The man who could see you for ten days and be still insensible to— Well, never mind him, he would be beneath contempt," says Dugdale. "As for me, the very first time I ever saw you—"

"Oh, DON'T!" says she, hiding her face on his breast.

"On our very first introduction—"

"Dick, if you insist on talking about *that*—I—I *won't* marry you," says she, indignantly.

"And if I don't, you will?"

"Oh, you *know* it," says she, so shyly, so sweetly, that he feels earth has no more to offer him.

"And now, not another tear," says he, presently, when their raptures and explanations, and all the blessed vows that lovers from time immemorial have given and taken, have been gone through. "Here, take my handkerchief; yours is wet through. (Bless me, what ridiculous things girls use, to be sure.) Not another tear shall you shed all your life through if *I* can prevent it. But there is one thing that has always puzzled me. May I ask you about it?"

"Is—is it about—*that?*" nervously.

"Yes. I want to know why both the rooms were blue?"

"That was Augusta's fault. She liked the old room so much—*yours*, that she had another done up like it—*mine!* I—I wish she hadn't."

"Well, I don't," says Dugdale. "One of the sweetest recollections of my life will be of a little soft brown curly head lying—"

Here Miss Englethorpe makes such a desperate effort to escape from his encircling arms, that he has to break off in the middle of his enthusiastic memories to circumvent her.

"Well, I won't—I swear it!" declares he. "Not another word on the subject shall pass my lips until we are such an ancient Darby and Joan that it will seem like a dream to us."

"Now, you PROMISE, mind," says she, and then pauses, so evidently full of a desire to say something else, that instinctively he says:

"Well?"

"There is just one thing that has troubled me most of all," confesses she, falling into a little whisper, and so turning her head that he can't see her eyes. "Was—*that time*—you know—was my hair *very* crumpled? Was," plucking nervously at the button of his coat, "was I looking *very* dreadful?"

"Oh! darling heart! *How* could you look that?" cries he, straining her to his heart.

THE END.

IRISH LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

BY THE "DUCHESS."

I KNOW the popular notion is that romance runs riot in Ireland. All the old songs are full of this idea, and all the old stories. But for my part I believe there never was a country where romance is such a dead letter.

Courtship and marriage is pretty much the same thing all the world over, given the same status in society. Select two people of opposite sexes, call them toward each other. They come, they see, and one, at all events, is conquered. It is the very oldest of all old games, and has been vigorously played by high and low from the hour Adam first laid eyes on Eve—and (if we believe in Milton) how charming that first view must have been—until to-day.

They meet, these two, they look, they love—though (as I believe) not until they have looked a great many times. The theory of "love at first sight," though useful for sentimental purposes and for the working out of certain plots, is not a practical one; is, on the contrary, distinctly shadowy. However, it may be with lovers in warmer climates, in mine the affection or liking that grows into passion takes time to ripen it. And the country is a better field for the perfecting of this state of feeling than the town—

the simple open country, that seems to hold nothing hidden in its innocent fields and hills, its delicate gardens and wild, glad ocean.

See, here is a quiet village, where there are but half a dozen select families when all is told, and on which a young man from the wider spheres beyond descends, full of a belief in himself and his power to defy the enchantments of all the unsophisticated maidens upon earth. That young man arrives in the smartest of collars, the newest of hats, coats that Poole alone could have given—and finds himself somebody's slave within a month. It is the careless picnic or the impromptu dance, the moonlight stroll or the mild tennis-party that does it; and marriage, the usual consequence of falling in love in this most improvident of all isles, swallows that young man up alive.

So much for the people whom we all know, among whom we live in every clime. For there are always the big people and the little, and always will be, in spite of every socialist that ever thundered.

"The poor always ye have with you," says St. John, that gentlest of all saints, and what a truth lies in his words!

It is with the very poor of Ireland and their love affairs that I would now deal. And alas! for sentiment where they are concerned. It is no longer here; if it ever did exist, it is now dead. A cow, a pig, even a feather-bed has been known to influence the making of "a match." I know that tradition, old lore, and Moore's melodies are against me, but I, who have lived among them for two-and-thirty years, I say this. Extremes meet. The king's

sons or daughters may not wed according to their choice; their consorts must be chosen for them by their royal father and mother. The Irish farmer's sons and daughters may not marry until a spouse is found for them and approved of by their father and mother. And, oh, the endless detail, the small bargainings, the little, little things that are gone into piecemeal, and that ofttimes make or mar the marriage.

Love before marriage is so very exceptional as to be almost unknown among the farming classes in Ireland. Matches are made and carried out with scarcely a consideration for the two most nearly concerned, very little or no intercourse being considered necessary between the two young people designed for bride and bridegroom until the actual day of marriage. It is not, indeed, at all an unusual thing for the young man and woman to meet for the first time at the chapel gate on the morning that is to make them man and wife. Everything is arranged by the parents. Their farm is worth so much, therefore the eldest son is worth so much. He will inherit it. The burning question then is to discover some one fit to mate with their son—some one with a "fortune" equal to his. This desirable daughter-in-law once found (be she old or ugly), the matter may be considered arranged. The bridegroom, impressed by the general talk about the bride's "fortune," which always takes precedence of her "looks," falls in with the family view of the affair, and a wedding follows as a matter of course. Providence, seeing all this, has mercifully ordained that most Irish girls should be comely.

The marriage once consummated, the old people give up the reins of government and retire into the chimney-corner, leaving the young couple masters of the field. A most unwise arrangement, that generations of fools in their line have not sufficed to wipe out.

Marriages thus completed, with all the chilling formulas that mark the alliances of the crowned heads of Europe, are nevertheless in Ireland almost always happy. Rarely do they turn out badly. An unfaithful husband is so scarce a thing that all the country-side would ring with the mention of him should be present himself; an unfaithful wife is almost unknown. Ireland, in spite of her many imperfections, in spite of her unsubduable people who annoy so terribly the decent House of Commons, people who in their native land would be fêted by only the lowest and most vulgar class, is the most moral country in the world, and—if I may dare say so in face of all the criminality that has unhappily of late characterized it—the most tender-hearted.

That I should speak so, let you of all and every political opinion forgive me—for I am Irish born, and Ireland I love—and this small, turbulent, lovable, wild, beautiful Ireland is both my greatest grief and my greatest joy!

Where, then, is romance? Descending from the farmers to even a lower scale in the gamut of the human drama we get to the laborers. Poor souls! who will surely suffer the most now that the law has fallen with so severe a hand upon the landlords. For to them, the landlords, alone they had to look in all their griefs and woes. God pity them when they come to learn that the "gentry" are a

thing of the past (which soon will be), and that the farmers are their only support when cruel famine presses on them.

Yet even with these romance is hardly known. Until very lately the servants in Ireland were drawn from the ranks of the laborers, good and honest girls, without a grain of understanding in the culinary or domestic line, but who were quite capable of being taught. Among the others of my household last year was a certain Honora Casey, who, after five months' hard teaching, was a very presentable house-maid.

It was close on the end of Shrovetide, that most stirring of all times in an Irish village, when the chances of matrimony ebb and flow like the tide, and when a maiden has barely time to hesitate as to whether she will or will not. During Shrove one marries very cheap, after Shrove very dear. "Those intending to marry, take notice." I was not intending to marry, having gone through the wedding ceremony many years ago, and was sitting in my drawing-room one night last year playing bésique with the eldest of the children, when Honora opened the door, and, standing on the threshold, looked hard at me.

"Well, Honora?" said I, feeling that something was due from me to her, seeing how moonstruck she appeared.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said she, dropping an elaborate courtesy, "but may I go up to the entrance gate, ma'am, av ye plaze?"

"Dear me, it's late, Honora, isn't it?" said I. "Nine o'clock, if it's a minute—eh, Daisy?" appealing to my

little partner at bésique. "What can you want at the gate at this hour?"

"Plaze, ma'am, he's come," said she.

"Who's come?" asked I.

"Himself, ma'am. Me mother thinks it's about time I'd settle—an'—an'—an' she's chosen a boy for me!"

"Good heavens! she's going to be married," said I, addressing the innocent Daisy, who naturally stared blankly at me.

"Who is it, Honora?" asked I, as quietly as a woman can who knows that one of her best servants is about to desert her.

"I don't know, ma'am," said she.

"What's his name?" demanded I. I liked the girl, and was reasonably anxious about her future welfare.

"I never heard it, ma'am," said she, with a mild but exasperating manner. "Mother knows, but—but—I'll know soon if ye'll let me go to the gate."

"Oh, go!" said I. It seemed too dreadful. I had heard of marriages arranged like this, but up to the present moment I had only partly believed in them. I didn't quite believe still. I called her back.

"And when are you to be married, Honora?" asked I. "Next year, eh?"

"Law, no! To-morrow, ma'am," said she, with the broad and lovely smile that had endeared her to me.

I asked no more questions. In one blow I lost my faith in the romance of Irish history and my house-maid.

But if you would know whether Irish marriages are hap-

py, as a rule, my answer must be "Yes." Among the lower ranks one never hears of a case of infidelity, and among those of one's own class—well, hardly ever!

This, at all events, I can affirm, that I have a large, a tremendous number of acquaintances, and among them all there has been but one case of divorce, and were I to lay bare the real facts of that case to you, I think, dear friends, you would forgive her.

THE END.

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744 Diana Carew; or, For a Woman's Sake..... 20
883 Once Again..... 20

Jessie Fothergill's Works.

314 Peril..... 20
572 Healey..... 20
935 Borderland..... 20
1099 The Lasses of Leverhouse. ... 20

R. E. Francillon's Works.

135 A Great Heiress: A Fortune in Seven Checks..... 10
319 Face to Face: A Fact in Seven Fables..... 10
360 Ropes of Sand..... 20
656 The Golden Flood. By R. E. Francillon and Wm. Senior.. 10
911 Golden Bells..... 20

Emile Gaboriau's Works.

7 File No. 113..... 20
12 Other People's Money..... 20
20 Within an Inch of His Life... 20
26 Monsieur Lecoq. Vol I..... 20
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33 The Clique of Gold..... 20
38 The Widow Lerouge..... 20
43 The Mystery of Orcival..... 20
144 Promises of Marriage..... 10
979 The Count's Secret. Part I... 20
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1002 Marriage at a Venture..... 20
1015 A Thousand Francs Reward.. 20
1045 The 13th Hussars..... 20
1078 The Slaves of Paris.—Blackmail. 1st half..... 20
1078 The Slaves of Paris.—The Champdoce Secret. 2d half.. 20
1083 The Little Old Man of the Batignolles..... 10

Charles Gibbon's Works.

64 A Maiden Fair..... 10
317 By Mead and Stream..... 20

James Grant's Works.

566 The Royal Highlanders; or, The Black Watch in Egypt... 20
781 The Secret Dispatch..... 10

Miss Grant's Works.

222 The Sun-Maid..... 20
555 Cara Roma..... 20

Arthur Griffiths's Works.

614 No. 99..... 10
680 Fast and Loose..... 20

H. Rider Haggard's Works.

432 The Witch's Head . 20
753 King Solomon's Mines..... 20
910 She: A History of Adventure. 20
941 Jess..... 20
959 Dawn..... 20
989 Allan Quatermain..... 20
1049 A Tale of Three Lions, and On Going Back..... 20
1100 Mr. Meeson's Will..... 20
1105 Maiwa's Revenge..... 10
1140 Colonel Quaritch, V. C.. 20
1145 My Fellow Laborer..... 20

Thomas Hardy's Works.

139 The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid..... 10
530 A Pair of Blue Eyes..... 20

690 Far From the Madding Crowd 20
791 The Mayor of Casterbridge... 20
945 The Trumpet-Major..... 20
957 The Woodlanders..... 20

John B. Harwood's Works.

143 One False, Both Fair..... 20
358 Within the Clasp..... 20

Mary Cecil Hay's Works.

65 Back to the Old Home..... 10
72 Old Myddelton's Money..... 20
196 Hidden Perils..... 20
197 For Her Dear Sake..... 20
224 The Arundel Motto..... 20
281 The Squire's Legacy..... 20
290 Nora's Love Test..... 20
408 Lester's Secret..... 20
678 Dorothy's Venture..... 20
716 Victor and Vanquished..... 20
849 A Wicked Girl..... 20
987 Brenda Yorke..... 20
1026 A Dark Inheritance..... 20

Mrs. Cashel-Hoey's Works.

313 The Lover's Creed..... 20
802 A Stern Chase..... 20

Tighe Hopkins's Works.

509 Nell Haffenden..... 20
714 'Twixt Love and Duty..... 20

Thomas Hughes's Works.

120 Tom Brown's School Days at Rugby..... 20
1139 Tom Brown at Oxford. Vol. I. 20
1139 Tom Brown at Oxford. Vol. II. 20

Fergus W. Hume's Works.

1075 The Mystery of a Hansom Cab. 20
1127 Madam Midas..... 20

Works by the Author of "Judith Wynne."

332 Judith Wynne..... 20
506 Lady Lovelace..... 20

William H. G. Kingston's Works.

117 A Tale of the Shore and Ocean 20
133 Peter the Whaler..... 10
761 Will Weatherhelm..... 20
763 The Midshipman, Marmaduke Merry..... 20

Vernon Lee's Works.

399 Miss Brown..... 20
859 Ottilie: An Eighteenth Century Idyl. By Vernon Lee. The Prince of the 100 Soups. Edited by Vernon Lee..... 20

Charles Lever's Works.

191 Harry Lorrequer..... 20
212 Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon. 1st half..... 20
212 Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon. 2d half..... 20
243 Tom Burke of "Ours." 1st half 20
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Mary Linskill's Works.

473 A Lost Son..... 20
620 Between the Heather and the Northern Sea..... 20

Mrs. E. Lynn Linton's Works.

122 Ione Stewart..... 20
817 Stabbed in the Dark..... 10
886 Paston Carew, Millionaire and Miser..... 20
1109 Through the Long Nights. 1st half..... 20
1109 Through the Long Nights. 2d half..... 20

Samuel Lover's Works.

663 Handy Andy..... 20
664 Rory O'More..... 20

Edna Lyall's Works.

738 In the Golden Days..... 20
1147 Knight-Errant..... 20

1149 Donovan: A Modern Englishman..... 20

Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's Works.

40 The Last Days of Pompeii..... 20
83 A Strange Story..... 20
90 Ernest Maltravers..... 20
130 The Last of the Barons. 1st half 20
130 The Last of the Barons. 2d half 20
162 Eugene Aram..... 20
164 Leila; or, The Siege of Grenada 10
650 Alice; or, The Mysteries. (A Sequel to "Ernest Maltravers") 20
720 Paul Clifford..... 20
1144 Rienzi..... 20

George Macdonald's Works.

282 Donal Grant..... 20
325 The Portent..... 10
326 Phantastes. A Faerie Romance for Men and Women..... 10
722 What's Mine's Mine..... 20
1041 Home Again..... 20
1118 The Elect Lady..... 20

Katharine S. Macquoid's Works.

479 Louisa..... 20
914 Joan Wentworth..... 20

E. Marlitt's Works.

652 The Lady with the Rubies.... 20
858 Old Ma'm'selle's Secret..... 20
972 Gold Elsie..... 20
999 The Second Wife..... 20
1093 In the Schillingscourt..... 20
1111 In the Counsellor's House..... 20
1113 The Bailiff's Maid..... 20
1115 The Countess Gisela..... 20
1130 The Owl-House..... 20
1136 The Princess of the Moor..... 20

Florence Marryat's Works.

159 Captain Norton's Diary, and A Moment of Madness..... 10
183 Old Contrairy, and Other Stories..... 10

208 The Ghost of Charlotte Cray, and Other Stories..... 10
276 Under the Lilies and Roses... 10
444 The Heart of Jane Warner.... 20
449 Peeress and Player..... 20
689 The Heir Presumptive..... 20
825 The Master Passion..... 20
860 Her Lord and Master..... 20
861 My Sister the Actress..... 20
863 "My Own Child."..... 20
864 "No Intentions."..... 20
865 Written in Fire..... 20
866 Miss Harrington's Husband; or, Spiders of Society..... 20
867 The Girls of Feversham..... 20
868 Petronel..... 20
869 The Poison of Asps..... 10
870 Out of His Reckoning..... 10
872 With Cupid's Eyes..... 20
873 A Harvest of Wild Oats..... 20
877 Facing the Footlights..... 20
893 Love's Conflict. 1st half..... 20
893 Love's Conflict. 2d half..... 20
895 A Star and a Heart..... 10
897 Ange..... 20
899 A Little Stepson..... 10
901 A Lucky Disappointment..... 10
903 Phyllida..... 20
905 The Fair-Haired Alda..... 20
939 Why Not?..... 20
993 Fighting the Air..... 20
998 Open Sesame..... 20
1004 Mad Dumaresq..... 20
1013 The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt..... 20
1022 Driven to Bay..... 20
1126 Gentleman and Courtier..... 20

Captain Marryat's Works.

88 The Privateersman..... 20
272 The Little Savage..... 10
279 Rattlin, the Reefer..... 20
991 Mr. Midshipman Easy..... 20

Helen B. Mathers's Works.

13 Eyre's Acquittal..... 10
221 Comin' Thro' the Rye..... 20
438 Found Out..... 10
535 Murder or Manslaughter?..... 10
673 Story of a Sin..... 20
713 "Cherry Ripe"..... 20
795 Sam's Sweetheart..... 20
798 The Fashion of this World.... 10
799 My Lady Green Sleeves..... 20

Justin McCarthy's Works.

121 Maid of Athens..... 20
602 Camiola..... 20
685 England Under Gladstone. 1880—1885..... 20
747 Our Sensation Novel. Edited by Justin H. McCarthy, M.P.. 10
779 Doom! An Atlantic Episode.. 10

George Meredith's Works.

350 Diana of the Crossways..... 10
1146 Rhoda Fleming..... 20

1150 The Egoist..... 20

Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller's Works.

267 Laurel Vane; or, The Girls' Conspiracy..... 20
268 Lady Gay's Pride; or, The Miser's Treasure..... 20
269 Lancaster's Choice..... 20
316 Sworn to Silence; or, Aline Rodney's Secret..... 20

Jean Middlemas's Works.

155 Lady Muriel's Secret..... 20
539 Silvermead..... 20

Alan Muir's Works.

172 "Golden Girls"..... 20
346 Tumbledown Farm..... 10

Miss Mulock's Works.

11 John Halifax, Gentleman. 1st half..... 20
11 John Halifax, Gentleman. 2d half..... 20
245 Miss Tommy, and In a House-Boat..... 10
808 King Arthur. Not a Love Story 20
1018 Two Marriages..... 20
1038 Mistress and Maid..... 20
1053 Young Mrs. Jardine..... 20

David Christie Murray's Works.

58 By the Gate of the Sea..... 10
195 "The Way of the World"..... 20
320 A Bit of Human Nature..... 10
661 Rainbow Gold..... 20
674 First Person Singular..... 20
691 Valentine Strange..... 20
695 Hearts: Queen, Knave, and Deuce..... 20
698 A Life's Atonement..... 20
737 Aunt Rachel..... 10
826 Cynic Fortune..... 20
898 Bulldog and Butterfly, and Julia and Her Romeo..... 20
1102 Young Mr. Barter's Repentance..... 10

Works by the author of "My Ducats and My Daughter."

376 The Crime of Christmas Day. 10
596 My Ducats and My Daughter.. 20

W. E. Norris's Works.

184 Thirlby Hall..... 20
277 A Man of His Word..... 10
355 That Terrible Man..... 10
500 Adrian Vidal..... 20
824 Her Own Doing..... 10
848 My Friend Jim..... 20
871 A Bachelor's Blunder..... 20
1019 Major and Minor. 1st half..... 20
1019 Major and Minor. 2d half..... 20
1084 Chris..... 20
1141 The Rogue. 1st half..... 20
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Laurence Oliphant's Works.

47 Altiora Peto..... 20
537 Piccadilly..... 10

Mrs. Oliphant's Works.

45 A Little Pilgrim..... 10
177 Salem Chapel..... 20
205 The Minister's Wife..... 30
321 The Prodigals, and Their Inheritance..... 10
337 Memoirs and Resolutions of Adam Graeme of Mossgray, including some Chronicles of the Borough of Fendie..... 20
345 Madam..... 20
351 The House on the Moor..... 20
357 John..... 20
370 Lucy Crofton..... 10
371 Margaret Maitland..... 20
377 Magdalen Hepburn: A Story of the Scottish Reformation.... 20
402 Lilliesleaf; or, Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland of Sunnyside..... 20
410 Old Lady Mary..... 10
527 The Days of My Life..... 20
528 At His Gates..... 20
568 The Perpetual Curate..... 20
569 Harry Muir..... 20
603 Agnes. 1st half..... 20
603 Agnes. 2d half..... 20
604 Innocent. 1st half..... 20
604 Innocent. 2d half..... 20
605 Ombra..... 20
645 Oliver's Bride 10
655 The Open Door, and The Portrait..... 10
687 A Country Gentleman..... 20
703 A House Divided Against Itself 20
710 The Greatest Heiress in England 20
827 Effie Ogilvie..... 20
880 The Son of His Father 20
902 A Poor Gentleman..... 20

"Ouida's" Works.

4 Under Two Flags..... 20
9 Wanda, Countess von Szalras. 20
116 Moths 20
128 Afternoon, and Other Sketches 10
226 Friendship 20
228 Princess Napraxine... 20
238 Pascarel..... 20
239 Signa..... 20
433 A Rainy June..... 10
639 Othmar. 1st half..... 20
639 Othmar. 2d half..... 20
671 Don Gesualdo..... 10
672 In Maremma. 1st half..... 20
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874 A House Party..... 10
974 Strathmore; or, Wrought by His Own Hand. 1st half..... 20
974 Strathmore; or, Wrought by His Own Hand. 2d half..... 20
981 Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage. 1st half... 20
981 Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage. 2d half..... 20
996 Idalia. 1st half..... 20
996 Idalia. 2d half..... 20
1000 Puck. 1st half. 20
1000 Puck. 2d half 20
1003 Chandos. 1st half..... 20
1003 Chandos. 2d half..... 20
1017 Tricotrin. 1st half..... 20
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James Payn's Works.

48 Thicker Than Water..... 20
186 The Canon's Ward..... 20
343 The Talk of the Town..... 20
577 In Peril and Privation..... 10
589 The Luck of the Darrells..... 20
823 The Heir of the Ages..... 20

Miss Jane Porter's Works.

660 The Scottish Chiefs. 1st half. 20
660 The Scottish Chiefs. 2d half. 20
696 Thaddeus of Warsaw..... 20

Cecil Power's Works.

336 Philistia..... 20
611 Babylon..... 20

Mrs. Campbell Praed's Works.

428 Zéro: A Story of Monte-Carlo 10
477 Affinities 10
811 The Head Station..... 20

Eleanor C. Price's Works.

173 The Foreigners..... 20
331 Gerald..... 20

Charles Reade's Works.

46 Very Hard Cash..... 20
98 A Woman-Hater..... 20
206 The Picture, and Jack of All Trades..... 10
210 Readiana: Comments on Current Events..... 10
213 A Terrible Temptation..... 20
214 Put Yourself in His Place..... 20
216 Foul Play..... .20
231 Griffith Gaunt; or, Jealousy.. 20
232 Love and Money; or, A Perilous Secret..... 10
235 "It is Never Too Late to Mend." A Matter-of-Fact Romance..... 20

Mrs. J. H. Riddell's Works.

71 A Struggle for Fame 20
593 Berna Boyle..... 20
1007 Miss Gascoigne..... 20
1077 The Nun's Curse..... 20

"Rita's" Works.

252 A Sinless Secret..... 10
446 Dame Durden..... 20
598 "Corinna." A Study..... 10
617 Like Dian's Kiss..... 20
1125 The Mystery of a Turkish Bath 10

F. W. Robinson's Works.

157 Milly's Hero..... 20
217 The Man She Cared For..... 20
261 A Fair Maid..... 20
455 Lazarus in London..... 20
590 The Courting of Mary Smith.. 20
1005 99 Dark Street..... 20

W. Clark Russell's Works.

85 A Sea Queen..... 20
109 Little Loo..... 20
180 Round the Galley Fire..... 10
209 John Holdsworth, Chief Mate. 10
223 A Sailor's Sweetheart..... 20
592 A Strange Voyage..... 20
682 In the Middle Watch. Sea Stories..... 20
743 Jack's Courtship. 1st half... 20
743 Jack's Courtship. 2d half.... 20
884 A Voyage to the Cape..... 20
916 The Golden Hope..... 20
1044 The Frozen Pirate..... 20
1048 The Wreck of the "Grosvenor" 20
1129 The Flying Dutchman; or, The Death Ship..... 20

Adeline Sergeant's Works.

257 Beyond Recall..... 10
812 No Saint..... 20

Sir Walter Scott's Works.

28 Ivanhoe..... 20
201 The Monastery..... 20
202 The Abbot. (Sequel to "The Monastery")..... 20
353 The Black Dwarf, and A Legend of Montrose..... 20
362 The Bride of Lammermoor... 20
363 The Surgeon's Daughter..... 10
364 Castle Dangerous..... 10
391 The Heart of Mid-Lothian.... 20
392 Peveril of the Peak..... 20
393 The Pirate..... 20
401 Waverley..... 20
417 The Fair Maid of Perth; or, St. Valentine's Day..... 20
418 St. Ronan's Well..... 20
463 Redgauntlet. A Tale of the Eighteenth Century..... 20
507 Chronicles of the Canongate, and Other Stories..... 10
1060 The Lady of the Lake..... 20
1063 Kenilworth. 1st half..... 20
1063 Kenilworth. 2d half..... 20

J. H. Shorthouse's Works.

111 The Little School-master Mark 10
1148 The Countess Eve..... 20

William Sime's Works.

429 Boulderstone; or, New Men and Old Populations..... 10
580 The Red Route..... 20
597 Haco the Dreamer..... 10
649 Cradle and Spade..... 20

Hawley Smart's Works.

348 From Post to Finish. A Racing Romance..... 20
367 Tie and Trick..... 20
550 Struck Down..... 10
847 Bad to Beat..... 10
925 The Outsider..... 20

Frank E. Smedley's Works.

333 Frank Fairlegh; or, Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil..... 20
562 Lewis Arundel; or, The Railroad of Life..... 20

T. W. Speight's Works.

150 For Himself Alone..... 10
653 A Barren Title..... 10

Robert Louis Stevenson's Works.

686 Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde..... 10
704 Prince Otto..... 10
832 Kidnapped..... 20
855 The Dynamiter..... 20
856 New Arabian Nights..... 20
888 Treasure Island..... 10
889 An Inland Voyage..... 10
940 The Merry Men, and Other Tales and Fables..... 20
1051 The Misadventures of John Nicholson..... 10
1110 The Silverado Squatters..... 20

Julian Sturgis's Works.

405 My Friends and I. Edited by Julian Sturgis..... 10
694 John Maidment..... 20

Eugene Sue's Works.

270 The Wandering Jew. Part I.. 30
270 The Wandering Jew. Part II. 30
271 The Mysteries of Paris. Part I 30
271 The Mysteries of Paris. Part II 30

George Temple's Works.

599 Lancelot Ward, M.P..... 10
642 Britta..... 10

William M. Thackeray's Works.

27 Vanity Fair. 1st half..... 20
27 Vanity Fair. 2d half..... 20
165 The History of Henry Esmond 20
464 The Newcomes. Part I..... 20
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670 The Rose and the Ring. Illustrated..... 10

Works by the Author of "The Two Miss Flemings."

637 What's His Offence?..... 20
780 Rare Pale Margaret..... 20
784 The Two Miss Flemings..... 20
831 Pomegranate Seed..... 20

Annie Thomas's Works.

141 She Loved Him!..... 10
142 Jenifer..... 20
565 No Medium..... 10

Bertha Thomas's Works.

389 Ichabod. A Portrait..... 10
960 Elizabeth's Fortune..... 20

Count Lyof Tolstoi's Works.

1066 My Husband and I..... 10
1069 Polikouchka..... 10
1071 The Death of Ivan Iliitch..... 10
1073 Two Generations..... 10
1090 The Cossacks..... 20
1108 Sebastopol..... 20

Anthony Trollope's Works.

32 The Land Leaguers..... 20
93 Anthony Trollope's Autobiography..... 20

147 Rachel Ray..... 20
200 An Old Man's Love..... 10
531 The Prime Minister. 1st half. 20
531 The Prime Minister. 2d half.. 20
621 The Warden..... 10
622 Harry Heathcote of Gangoil.. 10
667 The Golden Lion of Granpere. 20
700 Ralph the Heir. 1st half..... 20
700 Ralph the Heir. 2d half..... 20
775 The Three Clerks..... 20

Margaret Veley's Works.

298 Mitchelhurst Place..... .. 10
586 "For Percival"..... 20

Jules Verne's Works.

87 Dick Sand; or, A Captain at Fifteen..... 20
100 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas 20
368 The Southern Star; or, the Diamond Land. 20
395 The Archipelago on Fire.... 10
578 Mathias Sandorf. Illustrated. Part I... 10
578 Mathias Sandorf. Ill. Part II. 10
578 Mathias Sandorf. Ill. Part III. 10
659 The Waif of the "Cynthia".. 20
751 Great Voyages and Great Navigators. 1st half..... 20
751 Great Voyages and Great Navigators. 2d half..... 20
833 Ticket No. "9672." 1st half... 10
833 Ticket No. "9672." 2d half... 10
976 Robur the Conqueror; or, A Trip Round the World in a Flying Machine..... 20
1011 Texar's Vengeance; or, North Versus South. Part I..... 20
1011 Texar's Vengeance; or, North Versus South. Part II..... 20
1020 Michael Strogoff; or, The Courier of the Czar..... 20
1050 The Tour of the World in 80 Days..... 20
1152 From the Earth to the Moon. Illustrated..... 20
1153 Round the Moon. Illustrated 20

L. B. Walford's Works.

241 The Baby's Grandmother..... 10
256 Mr. Smith: A Part of His Life 20
258 Cousins..... ... 20
658 The History of a Week..... 10

Mrs. Humphry Ward's Works.

369 Miss Bretherton..... 10
1116 Robert Elsmere. 1st half..... 20
1116 Robert Elsmere. 2d half..... 20

F. Warden's Works.

192 At the World's Mercy..... 10
248 The House on the Marsh..... 10
286 Deldee; or, The Iron Hand... 20
482 A Vagrant Wife..... 20
556 A Prince of Darkness..... 20
820 Doris's Fortune..... 20
1037 Scheherazade: A London Night's Entertainment..... 20
1087 A Woman's Face; or, A Lakeland Mystery..... 20

William Ware's Works.

709 Zenobia; or, The Fall of Palmyra. 1st half..... .. 20
709 Zenobia; or, The Fall of Palmyra. 2d half 20
760 Aurelian; or, Rome in the Third Century 20

Samuel Warren's Works.

406 The Merchant's Clerk..... 10
1142 Ten Thousand a Year. Part I 20
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Works by the Author of "Wedded Hands."

628 Wedded Hands..... 20
968 Blossom and Fruit; or, Madame's Ward..... 20

E. Werner's Works.

327 Raymond's Atonement..... 20
540 At a High Price..... 20
1067 Saint Michael. 1st half..... 20
1067 Saint Michael. 2d half..... 20
1089 Home Sounds..... 20
1154 A Judgment of God..... 20

G. J. Whyte-Melville's Works.

409 Roy's Wife..... 20
451 Market Harborough, and Inside the Bar..... 20

John Strange Winter's Works.

492 Bootles' Baby; or, Mignon. Illustrated 10
600 Houp-La. Illustrated 10
638 In Quarters with the 25th (The Black Horse) Dragoons..... 10
688 A Man of Honor. Illustrated. 10
746 Cavalry Life; or, Sketches and Stories in Barracks and Out. 20
813 Army Society. Life in a Garrison Town..... 10
818 Pluck..... 10
876 Mignon's Secret..... 10
966 A Siege Baby and Childhood's Memories..... 20
971 Garrison Gossip: Gathered in Blankhampton..... 20
1032 Mignon's Husband..... 20
1039 Driver Dallas..... 10
1079 Beautiful Jim: of the Blankshire Regiment..... 20
1117 Princess Sarah..... 10
1121 Bootles' Children..... 10

Mrs. Henry Wood's Works.

8 East Lynne. 1st half..... 20
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255 The Mystery..... 20
277 The Surgeon's Daughters..... 10
508 The Unholy Wish 10
513 Helen Whitney's Wedding, and Other Tales..... 10
514 The Mystery of Jessy Page, and Other Tales..... 10
610 The Story of Dorothy Grape, and Other Tales.... 10
1001 Lady Adelaide's Oath; or, The Castle's Heir..... 20

1021 The Heir to Ashley, and The Red-Court Farm..... 20
1027 A Life's Secret..... 20
1042 Lady Grace..... 20

Charlotte M. Yonge's Works.

247 The Armourer's Prentices..... 10
275 The Three Brides..... 10
535 Henrietta's Wish; or, Domineering..... 10
563 The Two Sides of the Shield... 20
640 Nuttie's Father..... 20
665 The Dove in the Eagle's Nest. 20
666 My Young Alcides: A Faded Photograph..... 20
739 The Caged Lion..... 20
742 Love and Life..... 20
783 Chantry House..... 20
790 The Chaplet of Pearls; or, The White and Black Ribaumont. 1st half..... 20
790 The Chaplet of Pearls; or, The White and Black Ribaumont. 2d half..... 20
800 Hopes and Fears; or, Scenes from the Life of a Spinster. 1st half..... 20
800 Hopes and Fears; or, Scenes from the Life of a Spinster. 2d half..... 20
887 A Modern Telemachus..... 20
1024 Under the Storm; or, Steadfast's Charge..... 20
1133 Our New Mistress..... 20

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53 The Story of Ida. Francesca.. 10
61 Charlotte Temple. Mrs. Rowson..... 10
99 Barbara's History. Amelia B. Edwards..... 20
103 Rose Fleming. Dora Russell.. 10
105 A Noble Wife. John Saunders 20
112 The Waters of Marah. John Hill..... 20
113 Mrs. Carr's Companion. M. G. Wightwick..... 10
114 Some of Our Girls. Mrs. C. J. Eiloart..... 20
115 Diamond Cut Diamond. T. Adolphus Trollope..... 10
127 Adrian Bright. Mrs. Caddy.... 20
149 The Captain's Daughter. From the Russian of Pushkin..... 10
151 The Ducie Diamonds. C. Blatherwick..... 10
156 "For a Dream's Sake." Mrs. Herbert Martin..... 20
158 The Starling. Norman Macleod, D.D..... 10
160 Her Gentle Deeds. Sarah Tytler 10
161 The Lady of Lyons. Founded on the Play of that title by Lord Lytton..... 10
163 Winifred Power. Joyce Darrell..... 20
170 Great Treason, A. By Mary Hoppus. 1st half..... 20
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174 Under a Ban. Mrs. Lodge..... 20
176 An April Day. Philippa Prittie Jephson..... 10
178 More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands. Queen Victoria..... 10
182 The Millionaire..... 20
185 Dita. Lady Margaret Majendie 10
187 The Midnight Sun. Fredrika Bremer..... 10
198 A Husband's Story..... 10
203 John Bull and His Island. Max O'Rell..... 10
218 Agnes Sorel. G. P. R. James.. 20
219 Lady Clare: or, The Master of the Forges. Georges Ohnet 10
242 The Two Orphans. D'Ennery. 10
253 The Amazon. Carl Vosmaer.. 10
266 The Water-Babies. Rev. Chas. Kingsley..... 10
274 Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland. Biographical Sketch and Letters..... 10
285 The Gambler's Wife..... 20
289 John Bull's Neighbor in Her True Light. A "Brutal Saxon"..... 10
311 Two Years Before the Mast. R. H. Dana, Jr..... 20
329 The Polish Jew. (Translated from the French by Caroline A. Merighi.) Erckmann-Chatrian..... 10
330 May Blossom; or, Between Two Loves. Margaret Lee..... 20
334 A Marriage of Convenience. Harriett Jay..... 10
335 The White Witch..... 20
340 Under Which King? Compton Reade..... 20
341 Madolin Rivers; or, The Little Beauty of Red Oak Seminary. Laura Jean Libbey..... 20
347 As Avon Flows. Henry Scott Vince..... 20
352 At Any Cost. Edward Garrett. 10
354 The Lottery of Life. A Story of New York Twenty Years Ago. John Brougham..... 20
355 The Princess Dagomar of Poland. Heinrich Felbermann. 10
356 A Good Hater. Frederick Boyle 20
365 George Christy; or, The Fortunes of a Minstrel. Tony Pastor..... 20
366 The Mysterious Hunter; or, The Man of Death. Capt. L. C. Carleton..... 20
374 The Dead Man's Secret. Dr. Jupiter Paeon..... 20
381 The Red Cardinal. Frances Elliot..... 10
382 Three Sisters. Elsa D'Esterre-Keeling..... 10
383 Introduced to Society. Hamilton Aïdé..... 10

387 The Secret of the Cliffs. Charlotte French..... 20
403 An English Squire. C. R. Coleridge..... 20
407 Tylney Hall. Thomas Hood... 20
426 Venus's Doves. Ida Ashworth Taylor..... 20
430 A Bitter Reckoning. Author of "By Crooked Paths".... 10
435 Klytia: A Story of Heidelberg Castle. George Taylor..... 20
436 Stella. Fanny Lewald..... 20
441 A Sea Change. Flora L. Shaw. 20
442 Ranthorpe. George Henry Lewes..... 20
443 The Bachelor of the Albany... 10
457 The Russians at the Gates of Herat. Charles Marvin..... 10
458 A Week of Passion; or, The Dilemma of Mr. George Barton the Younger. Edward Jenkins..... 20
468 The Fortunes, Good and Bad, of a Sewing-Girl. Charlotte M. Stanley..... 10
483 Betwixt My Love and Me. By author of "A Golden Bar"... 10
485 Tinted Vapours. J. Maclaren Cobban..... 10
491 Society in London. A Foreign Resident..... 10
493 Colonel Enderby's Wife. Lucas Malet..... 20
501 Mr. Butler's Ward. F. Mabel Robinson..... 20
504 Curly: An Actor's Story. John Coleman..... 10
505 The Society of London. Count Paul Vasili..... 10
510 A Mad Love. Author of "Lover and Lord"..... 10
512 The Waters of Hercules..... 20
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519 James Gordon's Wife..... 20
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